"A CRITICAL STUDY OF MUGHAL PAINTINGS DURING AKBAR'S REIGN"

Abstract submitted for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

FINE ART

By

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Abstract





Mughal art has been of the most significant and vital school in the History of Indian art. After a detailed study of the origin and founding of the Mughal school, I strongly tend to agree that early Mughal paintings were the direct influence of the Indian school of Bihzad. Babur was the conneissiur and critic of art and painting and Babur's son, Humayun was intrumental in establishing an atelier in India and the work of painting seriously began. The Persian artists who highly impressed Humayun by their work, accompanied him to India and became the guiding hand behind the art school. They assisted greatly in the creation of the *'Dastan-i-Amir Hamza'* which was the first of the great series which resulted in the reputation of the Mughal school that is everlasting. The form and style of painting, generally known as *'Mughal painting'* was indeed and essentially the product and creation of the Mughal court. It is very evident to distinguish the paintings of the courts of the emperors Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan by style, form and content.

Portraiture occupied a very important position in the Mughal painting. Numerous Mughal emperors and nobles were painted during the Mughal period. Akbar had originated a new style of painting with a distinct technique and method. The chief objective, as per my analysis, was to produce illustrated manuscripts which were an elaborate production, requiring the effort and coordination of calligraphers and painters. Mughal artists were exposed to the sophisticated techniques of Persian and European traditions and I am convinced that it reflected an immense increase in the range of colours. The Persian flavour is extremely strong but the Indian elements too have been evident in the shape of faces and vitality. Akbar's interest in the various religions is magnified by his inclination to the Hindu classics, owing to the fact that he ordered the artists to illustrate the epics, Ramayana and the Mahabharata or *Razm Nama.*

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The majority of painters in the atelier were Indians who produced a school of Persian techniques blended with Indian training, evolving a concept of painting with the synthesis of the two styles. The miniatures became records of the emperor Akbar's activities.

The most outstanding feature of the Mughal artists achievement, as per my study, has been the expertise with which the technique derived from completely varied sources amalgamated into a harmonious whole. The paintings were essentially Persian synthesised with Indian and European styles.

The Mughal painting school was established by Akbar. He personally supervised the work of Indian and Persian artists and lavished wealth and titles on his talented artists. Akbar pioneered manuscript illustration. The most well known being the *Hamza Nama, Akbar Nama, Darab Nama, Ain-i-Akbari and Din-i-Ilahi.* Several Hindu manuscripts were also illustrated. His interest in Indian literature contributed to the changing of the Mughal school from its Persian beginning into an indigenous tradition.

The styles adopted during Akbar's reign were carried on and further refined and developed under Shah Jahan. The Mughal miniatures does not portray spiritual and emotional matters. This objectivity is the basic parameter of the Mughal miniatures. Interestingly, what I have observed and concluded is that though the Mughal miniatures tried to depict reality and nature at its best, it rarely showed a female figure. The court painters excelled and their delicate miniatures teemed with life with master brush strokes and details.

Portrait paintings were elevated to its great heights as the Mughal emperors had great interest in portraiture. Even in historical illustrations that depicted crowded court scenes, I can strongly visualize the utmost care and concern with which the individual faces and features were drawn and painted, highlighting the physical and psychological characteristics of the individuals being drawn. The use of shaded lines and colour tonating resulted in a 3-D effect.

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I am convinced and could not agree more that Akbar's contribution to the Mughal art has been outstanding with Akbar's great vision and unique judgement of talent that ensured and elevated the atelier of unsurpassed talent and timeless masterpieces.

Akbar was the first monarch to be interested in European art and obtained concrete knowledge of the Christian religious paintings. The work of numerous German and Finnish engravers were known to the Mughal court painters. The master painters in the atelier exhibit an excellent understanding of the Western techniques. I conclude that during Akbar reign, landscapes and motifs were shown as salient features of the composition and two types of European pictorial art was available to the Mughal atelier—engravings and illustrated manuscripts.

The religious manuscript was painted including the Bible yet it did not influence the Mughal artists to a great extent. The European prints were copied by Mughal artists but their Islamic traditions remained contrary. The Mughals used highlighting and shading to mark the forms to exist whereas the Deccanis did it to intensify the portrait. In spite of the numerous obligations, the Mughal school maintained its own indigenous qualities.

It is concluded that the Jain style of manuscript illustration influenced the Mughal school and vice-versa. Mughal period being the richest by the persistent uniformity of the shape and form of articles of utility, cultural interest and institution. A careful scruitinization infers that the themes chosen and the technique that followed were certainly of the miniature and that the Persian painting was indeed a miniaturist art. In the Hamza paintings, figures more vigorously and contributed dynamism of the entire composition while the Persian painting do not reflect any emotion. The Akbari painters drew inspiration from Persian sources on the very themes of heroic events and battle fields. Sufis and saints were popular themes too in Persian painting which influenced the Akbari paintings. Persian ethnic types are very common in the Hamza paintings, both in male and female figuration.

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The architectural motifs in Akbari paintings are both Persian and Indian prototypes, as is in the case of the rendering of foliage, but the initial decorative aspects disappeared. The Akbari manuscripts are illustrated with beautiful scenes depicting nature by techniques identical to Persian ones. These techniques were also repeated in drawing mountains and hillocks but the Mughal painters seem to have experimented with the motifs. The Persian feature of incorporating certain shapes of animals and human figures was also copied.

From their very inception, Akbari paintings were different from contemporary, classical Persian painting and had numerous elements which could not have any Persian reference. Akbar's decision that he was an Indian, aided the acclimatizing of his Persian cultural inheritance with India's. Thus, Akbari paintings happen to be a creative fusion of mainly Persian elements with Indian and European features.

The atelier has numerous top-class painters who progressed to become 'Ustads' or 'Masters'.

Mir Saiyyid Ali is a prime example of one such Tabrizi artist who contributed to various manuscripts of prime importance such as the *Darab Nama, Babar Nama, Razm Nama, Timur Nama* and many others in his inimitable Safavid style. But beyond Abu'l Fazl's reference to his ability, nothing more is known of his later connection to the Mughal school.

Dasawanth was a Hindu painter who was titled the *"first master of his age"*. He illustrated numerous important manuscripts though there is no specimen of his singular effort. He was appointed to the exalted position of the *"Master of the Mint"* which he served creditably for several years prior to his unfortunate suicide.

Abu'l Fazl was Akbar's confidant and historian. He was gifted with an extra-ordinary memory and genius and possessed a vision which made him quite ahead of his times.

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Aqa Riza was a professionally trained Safavid painter when he arrived at the Mughal court. However, despite adopting a veneer of *"Mughalisation"*, and being influenced by European Rennaissance art, he could not adapt his traditional attitudes of the modern ones and his style became passe'.

Abdus Samad was one of the most important Persian painters who accompanied Humayun to India and helped set up the Mughal atelier along with Mir Saiyyid Ali. He was honoured with the title of *'Shirin Qalam'*. The various artists of the atelier worked under these two masters. Abdus Samad acted as a continuous model of technical skill and control. He was also appointed as the Director of the Imperial Mint at Fatehpur Sikri (the capital).

Bishan Das was a brilliant painter chosen to accompany the embassy of Khan Alam to the court of Safavid Shah Abbas at Ishfanan where he painted portraits of various grandees of the royal clan which were greatly appreciated. On his return, he was given due prominence. His style is recognizable, consistent and depicts close proximity to Persian art.

Kesu Das was one of the greatest of Akbar's artist and is placed first below Basawan in the list of painters given by Abu'l Fazl in the *Ain-i-Akbari*. He was famed for his copies and adaptation of European prints. He was also a brilliant technician and by the time the first *Akbar Nama* commenced, the third most brilliant designer.

Basawan was the most important, prestigious and influential painter during the later years of Akbar's reign. His name can be seen in practically the entire list of the major Akbari manuscripts that were collaborations. His figures and character studies were unique. His achievements were crucial to the development of Jahangiri portraiture in the early seventeenth century.

Miskin had rendered the maximum number of miniature and seems to have achieved perfection in animal rendering. In rendering flora and fauna he even surpassed Basawan and became an unrivalled painter of his age during Jahangir's rule.

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Mansur had also become the master in rendering animals, having trained under major artists. His specialization in rendering birds, animals and flowers conferred on him the title *'Nadirul-Asr'*. His perfection in his art is obvious from the inscription with an ephithet 'Ustad'.

There were numerous painters in the Mughal atelier from which the following names are found repeatedly, Mohammed Alam, Abu Hasan, Farrukh Beg, Manohar, Murad, Muhammad Nadir, Inayat, Pidarath, Kanha, Kesu and Mahesh.

Unlike Akbar's reign, in which the paintings were collaborations, specialization became the artist's mainstay under Jahangir. Margin painting also developed as a separate branch only under Jahangir. The imperial masters related the themes or subjects. The thematic contents of the paintings were a reflection of the personal tastes, pride, pleasure, preferences, hobbies and temperament of the individuals kinds. In every sense, Mughal painting was a court art.

Thus, one concludes that the painters and their illustrations are an extremely important source of the the cultural history of the people of those days, then society, and all the related features and elements of their day-to-day lines. The faithful representations seen in the Akbari paintings cannot be ignored or their importance undermined by any historian or research scholar including myself.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the research work embodied in this thesis entitled ***"A CRITICAL STUDY OF MUGHAL PAINTINGS DURING AKBAR'S REIGN"*** has been carried out by **Ms. Annu Biala** *(nee Manuja)* under my guidance.

As far as my knowledge is concerned, this work is original and has not been submitted so far, in part or full, for any other degree in this or any other university. She is allowed to submit the work for the award of the degree of **"Doctor of Philosophy"** in Fine Art of the Department of Fine Art, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.

21.4.99

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research shall remain unaccomplished if I lack the attitude for a sense of gratitude to all those who have been closely associated with this thesis in their effort and energy to elevate this research, closest to the best produced papers: Whatever the shape of my indebtedness, most of it is related to the fact that all these people believed in my capability to achieve and my sincerity to a purpose.

- **Prof. (Ms.) Seema Javed,** chairman, Department of fine art, AMU, for her consistent monitoring of the work in progress, coupled with an excellent spirit of co-operation and valuable suggestions, in a pleasant and congenial academic environment.

- **Prof. (Dr.) A.M. Rizvi,** my guide and supervisor, for his sharp critical insights, active involvement throughout blended with the intellectual and constant interchange of concrete suggestions generating a very intense and stimulating climate for discussion, debate and dialogue.

- **Prof. (Ms.) Sartaj Rizvi**, Department of fine arts, for the zest and buoyancy that makes all the difference between doing things and doing them well.

- **Ar. Rajiv Biala,** practising architect and graphic designer who contributed graphic concepts with a vibrancy that speeds completion and enhances achievement besides redefining the conventional approach to presentation.

- **Ms .Anupama Wali,** my friend for her everlasting cooperation, sincere attitude, immense patience and knowledge of interpretation.

- **Mr. S.R. Manuja,** my beloved father, **Mr. R.R.Biala,** national award winner and distinguished educationist and **Mr. Arvind Biswas, IAS** for their unrepayable loans of guidance and providing me a sense of perspective with confidence and encouragement.

Contents




Chapter I




Introduction

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Origin and Development of Mughal Paintings In India

"The Mughal court presents the articulation of artistic activities in the field of painting of a unified and integrated form and style with a sense of purpose and direction based on the themes and tastes of individual Mughal monarchs"

The Mughal art is a combination of the Indo-Persian style which developed in India. It was influenced liberally by the existing Indian Rajput school.

The Mughal school was found by Akbar under whom it developed into a class of its own. It was essentially a product of the Mughal court. In form and content, it happens to be a departure from collective community tradition just as the Mauryan art was more than a millennium and a half before. Though it is not difficult for a discerning pair of eyes, to distinguish an Akbari from a Jahangiri one or the latter from a Shah Jahan painting, but the interesting and most significant factor is the strong common denominator which is constant in form and style from earlier and later ones as well as from those others of contemporary times which originated elsewhere than in the Mughal court.

Mughal artists due to new and more sophisticated techniques, learned both from Persian and European traditions. Pigments too contributed significantly to the distinctiveness of a style. In contrast to pre-Mughal paintings, those of the Mughal and Rajput school reflect an enormous increase in the range of colours.

Portraiture occupied very important position in the Mughal painting. A large number of portraits of the Mughal emperors and the nobilities were executed during the Mughal period.

Akbar was the first Mughal monarch who took a deep interest in the promotion of painting and following the Mongol and Timurid examples, he commissioned the work of illustrating numerous manuscripts.

The artists of Akbar's court were drawn from within the country and also from Iran. The style that developed was the best of the Bihzad school and

pre-Mughal Indian art, amalgamated with European and Chinese influences. Under him, painting appears to have been confined only to manuscript illustration. Several artists were employed at the court to paint the great treasure of Mughal miniature, *Abu'l Fazl* has given a brief list of only 17 artists. Among the artists, Hindus were greater in number.

Although very little is known about individual artists in Mughal India, there is considerable information about their techniques and methods. Akbar started a "*karkhana*" to originate a new style of painting. The main purpose was to produce illuminated manuscripts which was an elaborate production, requiring the cooperation of calligraphers, painters, preparators for various *accessories* such as colour grinder, gold workers, leather workers, book binders and many more. The books to be copied were often long and only by the strictest cooperation among all these different craftsmen and artists-some of whom were certainly Prima Donnas could a beautiful work be produced in time.

Abu'l Fazl tells us that *"the works of the painters were laid before Akbar weekly and he used to confer rewards according to the excellence of workmanship". Akbar had special admiration for the work of Hindu artists, notably Daswanth and Basawan.*

Akbar was very fond of the stories of Amir Hamza, an uncle of the prophet. The illustration of these stories, the *Hamza-Nama* was the first work entrusted to the Persian master *Mir Saiyyid Ali* called for 1400 pictures in volumes and the task was completed in 15 years. The pictures are in the Persian Safavid style. However in the later works like in the illustrations of the *Razm-Nama, Khamsa of Nizami* etc, Indian tones can be clearly seen.

Much of the paintings of the Akbari period show a restless energy. The painters reflected the exuberance of their patron, figures are shown in hurried movement and the compositions are crowded. As painting developed, the Mughal atelier lost its purely Persian characteristics and became

increasingly Indian by the middle of Akbar's reign. By the middle of Akbar's reign, the skies lost their gold and lapis Lazuli tones to break out into brilliant sunset colours.

Early Mughal art is purely masculine. From this it can be presumed that scenes of pleasure and dalliance with the ladies, which abound in later Mughal painting were also imaginary, the women portrayed being not the princesses themselves but the lesser attendants who worked freely in and out of the palaces and whose looks were no mystery to anyone.

The art of painting in its general finish and boldness of execution reached perfection during Akbar's reign. *Mir Saiyyid Ali of Tabriz, Khwaja Abdus Samad, Daswanth* and *Basawan* were the most renowned artists. Besides these four masters, there were thirteen other first rate painters at Akbar's court, mostly Hindus.

The Persian tradition as it had developed particularly under Bihzad in the later years of the 15th century, was notable for its decorative qualities and its lively sense of colour. The miniatures were usually book illustrations and were 2-D. The artists representing the different regions of India had brought with them not only the skill in painting but also their conventions in regard to drawings, use of colour and composition. Akbar had left the painters very much to their own devices. The atelier of Akbar thus created the Mughal style of painting. Certain conventions and types of figures were developed and these principles continued to be followed thereafter. The Mughal paintings now exhibited three-dimensional effects in contrast to the 2-dimensional Persian ones.

All facts and situations known so far have established beyond doubt that the Mughal painting was essentially a product of the Mughal court, organised and patronized from the beginning to end by the emperors themselves. Themes or subjects were selected by the Imperial masters rather than the artists themselves. *"The thematic contents of the paintings reflect the personal tastes and temperaments, preferences, prides, pleasures, fashions and past-time etc*

of the individual imperial patrons". In every sense Mughal painting was a court art.

In Mughal court painting, what is more interesting and perhaps more important that a strong common denominator remains throughut to distinguish the form and style from earlier and later ones. The Mughal court presents the articulation of artistic activities in the field of painting, of a unified and integrated form and style with a sense of purpose and direction. This implication is by and large upheld by an analysis of the paintings themselves, despite relative variations the style and emphasis on themes conditioned by the tastes and predilections of individual monarchs from Akbar to Aurangzeb.

By and large, the narrative-descriptive, dramatic and true to appearance aim and purpose remain constant throughout, so do the respective compositional schemes also maintain throughout a common denominator as does the character of a design and draughtsmanship. It's therefore, not very difficult to say for one who is not an expert, to be able to look at a given painting and say that it does or does not belong to the form and style of the Mughal court. The stamp of the form and style and the general character of the exercise is too clear and distinct to be missed.

The Mughal artist ingeniously combined the ancient Ajanta technique of perspective with that of contemporary western artists. In the multiple perspectives used on ancient Buddhist frescoes painters tried to suggest space by depicting figures simultaneously at eye level and from above, the direct view and the hierarchical perspective, placing figures in their order of importance and giving a kind of bird's eye view of the scene. By means of walls, rocks, cliffs and buildings certain figures were brought into the foreground and other set in the distance. This form, combined with the European use of receding background, helped to give Mughal miniatures their perspective. The drawing of cliffs, buildings and trees was replaced in the seventeenth century by grouping of minor characters arranged in

semicircular form, leaving a distinct space for the main figure. In the Ajanta tradition, a thin line of shading encloses the outline of the figures.

This becomes thicker and much prominent as a result of European influence, since colour contrast was frequently used to tend relief, especially in the drawing of the head, which is pushed into prominence by the darker background.

The Mughal miniatures make use of the same device. All the personages in the picture are connected by gesture, facial expression and proper positioning, and a harmonious balance is maintained in the composition.

The striving for harmony resulted in the depiction of individual part of the body from different angles, with the legs and body in profile and the face in semi profile and some times in reverse profile. The features of the face were also often portrayed from different angles.

During Jahangir times the European influence could be seen increasingly in the paintings. The colours were more muted and blended well together. This nationalistic influence can be best seen in the representation of landscapes.

Portraiture reached great heights during Jahangir's reign. The portrait were painted with great care of details and finesse of drawing and modeling.

The important manuscript illustrated during this period are the *"Ayar-i-Danish"*[1] an animal fable book and the *"Anwar-i-Suhaili"*.[2]

Babur was the first Mughal emperor who came to India. But it is likely that there were some painters in his entourage; for he had a love of nature and it depiction.

Babur became emperor in 1526 and ruled for four years. His son, Humayun, was ousted from the throne and spent fifteen year in exile. One of these years, 1544, the most memorable in terms of Indian painting, was spent at the court of Shah Tahmasp of Persia. The love of the arts was in

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1. Scales of Wisdom.
2. Persian Knight Sotires.

Humayun's blood and he was quite dazzled by the artistic output of the Persian court. He met two distinguished pupil of Bihzad, *Khwaja Abdus Samad* and *Mir Saiyyid Ali*, and invited them to India when he regained his throne for only seven months in 1555. It was from these artists that Humayun and his son, Akbar, took lessons in drawing. An atelier was set up in the palace and the serious work of painting began.

The Persian artists were the guiding spirit of the *Dastan-i-Amir Hamza,*[3] the first of the great series of paintings which gave the Mughal school its name and reputation.

"The foundation of the Mughal empire was laid by Babur in 1556 were he deafeated the pathan king Ibrahim Lodi. He was also accomplished in the art of peace. He was a talented poet in Turki and Persian, and his battles as well as his orgies were humanised by a breath of poetry".[3]

The foundation of Mughal painting are not very clear in the present state of our knowledge. Though Babur was a learned and cultured man, whose appreciation of the art of painting was based on a fine and sophisticated taste and sound knowledge, so far there is no evidence of his founding an atelier of artists.

MUGHAL NOBLE

"Portraiture occupies an important position in the Mughal painting. Numerous Mughal emperors and nobles were painted during the Mughal period".

"Although there is insufficient knowledge about individual artists in Mughal India, there is considerable information about their technique and methods. Akbar started a 'Karkhana'[4] *to originate a new style of painting. The main aim of design so was to produce illustrated manuscripts which was an elaborate production, requiring the cooperation of calligraphers, painters, preparations of various accessories. For eg. colour guiders, leather workers etc. The books to be copied were often voluminous and only by the strictest cooperation amongst these different*

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3. M.S. Randhawa, John Kemeth Galbraith, Indian Painting. The scene themes and legends, printed & published by A.F. Shaikh, 1982.
4. Workshop.

craftsmen and artists. Some of who were unquestionably Prima Donnas could such beautiful works be produced in the stipulated time period".

Mughal artists were exposed to the sophisticated techniques of Persian and European traditions. Pigments too can contribute significantly to the distinctiveness of a style. In contrast to pre-Mughal paintings, those of the Mughal and Rajput school reflect a great increase in the range of colours. This can be easily confirmed by the numerous Rajput drawings and patterns that have survived. It is also known that European prints and engravings were painstakingsly copied during Akbar's and Jahangir's time.

Humayun (1530-1556) was the first documental patron of Mughal painting, Humayun was a puzzling and intriguing figure. An inheritor rather a founder, albiet of a flimsy empire he was less Charismatic than his father, more formal and reserved, gentle, and more concerned with protocol. But he was also a gifted general an occasion, as when he defeated Bahadur Shah in Gujarat in 1535.

Humayun's visit to the Safavi court in 1544 was crucial to art history as it was to the Mughal empire. While there he admired the brilliant painting by Shah Tahmasp's artists. By luck, Shah Tahmasp's inspiring patronage of painting was then replaced by more responsible interests and in 1546. Humayun was able to call two safavi artist to accompany him to India. These were *Mir Saiyyid Ali* and *Abdus Samad*, both of whom left Tabriz along with a book binder and a mathematician in the summer of 1548. They first went to *Qandahar*, where they waited for a year till Humayun battled with *Kamsan*, until a lull in war enabled Humayun to have them escorted to Kabul. They arrived there in November 1549 were busy until the March to Hindus five year after in November 1554.

Humayun's choice of Abdus Samad and especially Mir Saiyyid Ali was consistent with the tendencies to naturalism already apparent in Babur's prose. Of all of Shah Tahmasp's artists, Mir Saiyyid Ali was the sharpest and most accurate observer, sparing no pains to record the precise shape

and texture of fur or metal or odd bumps of a nose. He was also a brilliant designer of arabesque, who shared his father genius for abstracting figure into slanting ornamental patterns. Unfortunately, the Mir artistic expertise was accompained by a moody and suspicious temperament.

Less talented, but more flexible and adjusting was Abdus Samad, whose Mughal phase was far longer and more productive. Painting done by him during the Kabul period reveal that he soon began to adapt his safavi style to the escalating mughal desire for accurate portraiture and anecdotal reportoire.

Although its unsigned, damaged and considerably repainted, the House of Timur can be recognised as Abdus Samad's work at Kabul or in India. The painting is grand in scale, *"sumptuous"*[5] in colour and a complete reflection of Humayun's royal taste; this picture is in cotton, is the major monument of early Mughal art. Seemingly, it continued to be highly respected and appreciated since it was brought up-to-date by the addition of portraits of three generations of Humayun's heirs.

Humayun acquainted himself with the studio of schools of leading artists which flourished there. He saw the paintings of the Persian artists, Aga Mirak, Sultan Muhammad and Muzaffar, pupils of the famous Bihzad. Thus he acquired a taste for paintings. In this way, he came in contact at Tabriz with Mir Saiyyid Ali, and Abdus Samad. They were persuaded by Humayun to join his court in Kabul in 1550 A.D. There he and his son, Akbar, took lessons in drawing and studied generally the art of painting under the two artists. When Humayun finally marched into India, after year of exile, he also brought with him these two distinguished artists.[6]

Akbar *(1556-1605)* although, illiterate, Akbar loved books, particularly illustrated ones. His vast library included volumes that would now be catalogued as history, with particular emphasis on his own dynasty including veterinary, anthropology, comparative religions, mathematics, engineering, military strategy, government theology, astronomy and literature. The final

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5. Costly and Expensive.
6. Dr. N.L. Mathur, Indian Miniature Painting.

volume of the *"Din-i-Akbari"*[6] contains sections on the arts, writing and paintings.

The Persian artists were the guiding spirit of the *"Dastan-i-Amir Hamza"*,[7] the first of the great series of paintings which gave the Mughal school its name and reputation. This was produced in the reign of Humayun's son, Akbar. The majority of painters in the atelier were Indians who had been trained in the existing school of painting in India. Even though the masters guided these apprentices to produce works using purely persian techniques, their basic Indian training soon asserted itself and a synthesis of the two styles emerged in their works, producing a school of painting which has been the subject of unlimited praise by all critics and connoisseurs.

The artists worked together on a sort of assembly line basis, where each developed his own specialty the first outline sketch, the filling in of colour, landscape or facial features. When the picture was finished, the *superintendent* would write the names of all the painters responsible in it, so the earliest Mughal paintings were far from being anonymous.

The *Dastan-i-Amir Hamza*, a massive work comprising 1,400 paintings, took fifteen year to complete. It tells of the exploits of the uncle of prophet Mohammed, Amir Hamza, while spreading the muslim faith and was painted in a series of exceptionally large-sized pictures-22 inches by 28-1/2 inches on cotton cloth. The canvases teem with life, recounting episodes in which Amir Hamza battles against various enemies and evil spirits to complete his mission. The Persian flavour is extremely strong but Indian elements are evident in the shape of faces or the vitality and majesty of an elephant.

Other works that were illustrated in Akbar's reign included the Khamsa of Nizami, a classic of Persian literature, the romantic tale of Laila and Majnu, Shahnamah, the great epic of ancient Persian, *"Razm Namah"*,[8] the Persian translation of the *"Akbar Namah"*[9] the history of his own rule.

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7. Epic Stories in Persian.
8. Epic tales from Mahabharata in Persian..
9. Historical events of Akbar's Period.

According to Abul Fazl, *"the work of all painter, are weekly laid before his majesty by the "Darogan"[10] and the clerks. He then confers rewards according to the excellence of workmanship, or he may increase the monthly salary".* Much progress was made in the commodition required by painters, and the correct prices of such artists were carefully ascertained. The mixing of colour has specially been improved. The pictures thus received a hitherto unknown finish excellent painters are now to be found in India, and master pieces worthy of Bihzad may be placed at the side of the wonderful works of European painters who have attained world wide fame. The miniatures of detail, the general finish and the boldness of execution now observed in pictures are incomparable; even inanimate objects look as if they have life. More than a hundred painters have become famous master of the art, while the number of those who approach perfection is large.

As painting developed in the Mughal ateliers, it lost its purely Persian characteristics and became increasingly Indian. By the middle of Akbar's reign, the skies lost their gold and tones break out into brilliant sunset colour. The stylized quality of Persian painting is replaced by movement and vigour, and the human figure becomes more and more Indian in feature and expression. Faces came alive showing that there was a close study of individual character traits. Miniatures became records of the emperor's activities. We see Akbar supervising the submission of a rebel; *hunting tigers*; receiving the manuscript of the *"Ain-i-Akbari"*[11] from Abul Fazl; having a rebel thrown to his death, storming the forts and so on.

"Basawan and Daswanth, Nanha and Bishan Das were some of the most famous painters of Akbar's court. Among the names mentioned in the Ain-in-Akbari are Kesu, Lal, Mukund, Madhu, and Jagan also gained repute".[12]

Akbar followed the Timurid tradition in which manuscript illumination received special attention. But painting at his court was not essentially an art of book-illustration, portraiture was important too. Akbar himself sat for his likeness, and ordered portraits to be made of all his nobles, Abul Fazl

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10. Supervisor.
11. Institutes of Akbar.
12. Brij Bushan Jamila, The World of Indian Miniature.

writes that an immense album was thus prepared. Akbar's interest in actual portrait was an innovation.

Akbar's great interest in painting is shown not only by his defence of painting against the censure of conservative muslims, but by the claim that he made for it as a source of revelation of divine wisdom. *"One day,* says Abul Fazl, *at a private party of friends of his majesty, who had conferred on several the pleasure of drawing near him, remarked, these are many that hate painting, but such men I dislike. It appears to me as if a painter had quite peculiar means of recognizing god, for a painter in sketching anything that has life, and in devising its limbs, one after the other, must come to feel that he cannot bestow individuality upon his work, and be thus forced to think of god, the gives of life, and will thus increase knowledge. Under the personal care and observation of the emperor, colours obtained a new beauty and pictures received a fresh finish. Most excellent painters are now to be found, and masterpieces, worthy of Bihzad, may be placed at the side of the wonderful works of the European painters who have attained world wide fame. The freshness of the work, the clarity of lines. The firmness of the hand and other excellent qualities are incomparable, even inanimate object look as if they had life".*[13]

Without Akbar the mughal empire and its art would be known only to specialists. The empire refounded, he was one of India's wisest and mightiest rulers, whose energy and inspiration sparked his followers to peak performances. When Humayun died, prince Akbar although not yet fourteen, was already soldiering in the, having been sent to the mountains with an army to expel the ex-king, Sikander Shah Afghan. Bairam Khan, one of his father's ablert generals, improvised a throne on which the boy began his reign. Later, as regent, Bairam Khan brought stability to the shaky kingdom and enabled the young ruler to grow with some degree of tranquility. Physically dynamic and adventurous in spirit, he baulked at many of the subjects usually taught to the princes, so preferring hunting and wrestling to reading that he remained illiterate. His son Jahangir reminisced that *"Akbar always associated with the learned of every creed and religion...and so*

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13. S.P. Verma, Mughal Painters and their Work, Delhi Oxford University Press, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, 1994.

much became clear to him through constant intercourse with the learned and wise that no one knew him to be illiterate and he was so well acquainted with the niceties of verse and prose composition that this deficiency was not thought of. Jahangir's lively portraiture was of middle height, but inclined to be tall, he was of the hue of wheat, his eyes and eyebrow were black, and his hands and arms long, on the left side of his nose, he had a flesly mole, very agreeable in appearance, of the size of half a pea. Those skilled in the science of physiognomy marked this mole a sign of great prosperity and exceeding good fortune. His august voice was very loud, and in speaking and explaining had a particular richness. In his actions and movements he was not like the people of the world, and the glory of god manifested itself in him. Notwithstanding his kingship, his treasures and his buried wealth past computation, his fighting elephants and horses, he never by a hairs breadth placed his foot beyond the base of humility before the throne of god, and never for one moment forgot him. He associated with the good of every race and creed and persuasion, and he was gracious to all in accordance with their condition and understanding. "His courage and boldness were such that he could mount raging, rutting elephants and subdue to obedience murderous elephants which would not allow there females near them".[14] (Jahangir's memoirs, by Regers and Beverage, London.

A practical visionary, *"Akbar was amplified by two mystical experiences. The first took place when he was twenty, in 1562. Like Saint Paul, he was riding a horse that stumbled, although no engulfing flash of light was reported in Abul Fazl's account of the incident. He, the wise and foreseeing one, regarded this as a message from god, and prostrated himself in devotion. A new foundation was laid for divine worship".*[15]

At this time, Akbar took several steps crucial to the success of his empire. He overcome the clique of haram ladies, prohibited the enslavement of Hindu prisoners of war, allowed Hindus to occupy important governmental posts, abolished a tax on pilgrims in 1563, and a year later did away with the Jizya, a poll tax on non-Muslims. In 1562, he also married a Hindu princess, the daughter of Raja Bihari Mal of Amber.

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14. S.C. Welch, Imperial Mughal Painting.
15. Dr. N.L. Mathur, Indian Miniature.

With devious practicality, Akbar appointed Rajputs to high positions; and once they had tasted Mughal power, he controlled them by the carrot and stick policy. He made it impossible for Mughal noblemen, whether Hindu or Muslim, to pass on power and wealth. At death, all lands, gold, elephants, horses etc. reverted to the crown, and only if the emperor approved were the heirs permitted to inherit any part of their estates.

Rajputs and Muslims, however, were not the only members of Akbar's circle, no were all his close associates Indian born. Word spread throughout the Muslim world that Akbar welcomed men of ability to his court. Poets, musicians, soldiers, theologians, painters, merchants and others seeking fortunes were drawn from as far afield as Europe and Africa, Turkey, Iran and Arabia.

The emperor also sought talent at home from all religious groups and ranks of society. He chose Raja Todar Mal, a Hindu of the business caste, as his revenue officer. Raja Birbal, a Brahmin, became one of Akbar's favourite companions, the so-called *'Nauratna'*[16]. Known for his wit and poetry, this man of religious background was one of the first to join Akbar's new sect, the *Din-i-Ilahi* another part of the imperial plan for the unification of India's desparate religious groups.

Akbar's projects were always purposeful, however diverse, all contributed to this grand imperial scheme. The translation into Persian of such Hindu religious works as the *Mahabharat*[17] and *Ramayana*[18].

The most remarkable artistic project from Akbar's reign is the *"Hamza Nama"*,[19] a series of grand pictures on cotton describing the fabulous adventures of Amir Hamza, an uncle of the Prophet.

The paintings are perfect visual equivalents of Akbar's surging spirit during the years when he had taken full control of the government and was advancing his schemes with godlike energy and intelligence. A picture such as Mirdukt's Escape fairly bursts from the page. Water seethes and

16. Nine Jewels.
17. Hindu Religious Epic.
18. Hindu Religious Epic.
19. Epic tales of Hamza in Persian.

pounds, men dash and the heroine gestures with theatrical bravado. Even the rocks are dynamic, recalling Abul Fazl's claim that *"even inanimate objects look like they had life".*

An important category of Akbar's paintings are illustrations to delux volumes of the literary classics, of which an early example is *"the ape outsmarts thieves"* of 1570. Such pictures are invariably assigned to the most admired artists, working unassisted. But while these miniatures can be ranked as the ateliers master pieces, they are not necessarily the most exciting. Outstanding artists also worked on less refined projects such as the copiously illustrated manuscripts that described not only Mughal history but also it's percussors in the Islamic world. Perhaps the earliest surviving manuscript of this sort is a dispersed *"Babur Nama"*[20] of about 1589, the year when Khan Khanan, one of Akbar's most literary nobles, completed the translation *'Babur Receiving Uzbek and Rajput Envoys in a Garden at Agra'* contains one of the most believable portraits of the founding emperor in his favourite garden surroundings, receiving envoys at Agra in 1528 from the Safavis, Uzbeks and Rajputs. As usual under such circumstances at the Mughal court, robes of honor, gold and silver, and richly worked swords and daggers were presented to the guests.

More dramatic and immediate is *"Akbar Restrains Hawai"*[21] from another dispersed manuscript, the emperor's own copy of Abul Fazl's Akbarnama. As usual in Akbars historical subjects, this magnificient competition was designed by a major artist, in this case Basawan, assisted by a lesser hand, here Chitra. The direction of labour, however was not lightly prescribed, and it is evident that even minor passages of this miniature were fully painted as well as designed by Basawan himself.

Not all of Akbar's pictures illustrated manuscripts. Many were made as independent compositions to be kept in albums. Some were animal studies. One such, among the earliest Mughal animal studies is *"Cow and Calf"* ascribable on stylistic grounds to Basawan.

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20. Persian Translation of Babur's Autobiography.
21. Akbar's Adventures with Elephants.

More common at this time, however, were portraits of courtiers and others who interested the emperor. According to Abul Fazl, *"His majesty himself sat for his likeness, and also ordered to have the likenesses taken of all the grandees of the realm. An immense album was thus formed, these that have passed away have received a new life, and those who are still alive have immortality promised to them"*. A portrait of stout Muslim nobleman with bristling mustachios, craggy profile, and a wrestler's proportions probably belonged to this album.

"The art of painting in its general finish and boldness of execution reached perfection during Akbar's reign". Mir Saiyyid Ali of Tabriz, Khwaja Abdus Samad, Daswanth and Basawan were the most renowned artists. Besides these four masters, there were thirteen other first rate painter at Akbar's court, mostly Hindus. There were Kesu, Lal, Mukund, Miskin, Farrukh, Madhu, Jagan, Mohesh, Khem Karah, tara[22] etc. Referring to the perfection attained by the painters of Akbar's court, Abdul Fazl writes: *"this is specially true of the Hindus. Their pictures surpass our conception of things"*.

Early in Akbar's reign, the portuguese, had established trading posts in India and in 1578 A.D. Akbar requested that a delegation of Jesuit fathers from Goa attend on him at Fatehpur Sikri. As gifts for the emperor whom the Jesuit fathers hoped to convert to christianity, they brought with them illustrated Bibles and other religious pictures. Those were studied with great interest at the Mughal court. Soon effects of this contact were seen in the Mughal miniatures. The court artists learnt about perspective and shading. The Mughal style also absorbed some of the western techniques.

The other important manuscript illustrated during the period of Akbar are the *"Gulistan of sadi"*[23] dated 1567 A.D. in the British Museum, London, Deval Rani of 1568 A.D., the *"Anwar-i-Suhaili"*[24] dated 1570 A.D. in the school of Oriental and African studies, University of London, another Gulistan of sadi in the Royal asiatic society Library a Diwan of the Poet Amir Shahi in the Bibliothique Nationale, *"Diwan-i-Hafiz"*,[25] the *Tuti-Nama*,[26] the Baharistan of Jami dated 1595 A.D. in the Budolian Library, the Darab

22. Akbar's Court Painters.
23. Collection of Shekh Sadi's Poems.
24. Persian Night Stories.
25. Poetic Compositions by Persian Poet Hafiz.
26. Parrot Stories in Persian.

Nama in the British Museum, the *Tarikh-i-Alfi*[27] circa 1590 A.D. the Jami-al-Tawarikh dated 1596 A.D. in the Gulistan Library in Tehran, a number of the *Babur-Nama*[28] manuscripts executed in the last decade of the 16th century, the *Twarikhe-Khandane-Taimuria* in the Khuda Baksh Library, Patna *"Akbar-Nama"*[29] of circa 1600 A.D. now in the victoria and Albert Museum, London, and the Jog Vashisht dated 1602 in the chestes Beatty Library, Dublin. The classical Persian Literature, *"Khamsa"*[30] and the collections of moral tales by Sadi and Jami were also illustrated. The atelier of Akbar thus created the Mughal style of painting. Certain conventions and types of figures were developed and these principles continued to be followed thereafter.

Jahangir *(1605-1627)* the son and successor of Akbar showed just as great interest in the art of painting as his father under him, the painting acquired greater charm, refinement and dignity.

Jahangir organised a staff and excellent painters and supervised their work. He was a connoisseur and critic of art and possessed the analytical knowledge of an expert. His power of observation was so great that he could tell the names of individual artists by seeings their paintings.

Many of Akbar's court painters, such as Abu-i-Hasan, Bishandas, Farrukh Beg, Daulat, Anand, Manohar and other continued to work for Jahangir. He was particularly enthusiastic about Abul Hasan the son of the Persian painter, Aka Riza, of Herat. Abul Hasan was engaged by Jahangir while still a prince and he was honoured with the title of *"Nadirazamah"*,[31] because he drew the picture of his accession as the frontispiece to the *Jahangir Nama*. In 1617 Jahangir selected Bishandas to accompany a mission to Persia to paint the portrait of Shah and the chief men of his state.

Aka Riza or Muhammad Riza painted in the traditional Persian style and this was practised by several other court painters, such as Farrukh Beg, the Kalmak. The two new painters from Samarkand, Md. Nadir, Md. Murad,

27. History of the World.
28. Memories of Babur.
29. Historical Events of Akbar's Period.
30. Romantic Poems of Laila-Majnu.
31. Marvel of the Age.

were excellent portrait painters. However Jahangir knowledge of the classical aspect of painting and his zeal for the art, combined with the skill of his court artists, led to the liberation of the Mughal art of painting from the tune age of persian influences and to the growth of art style essentially Indian learning more and more to Hindu traditions.

Under the patronage of Jahangir, the art of portraiture attained great excellence. The portrait were painted by the court with great case, love of detail and fineness of drawing and modelling.

Like his father, Jahangir liked European paintings with religious subjects. Sir Thomas Roe, the English ambassador, who spent four years 1615-1619 A.D. at the court, had many interesting conversations with the emperor far into the night on painting and art in general.

During this period, European influence manifested itself more and more in painting. The colours were no longer hard and enamel like as in the previous period but were softer and melted harmoniously together. The maturalistic influence is best seen in the representation of landscapes.

The important manuscripts illustrated during this period are: an animal fable book called *"Ayas-i-Danish"*,[32] the leaves of which are now in the Cowasji Jahangir collection, Bombay and the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin and the *Anwar-i-Suhaili*, another fable book in the British Museum, London, both executed between 1605-10 A.D. some miniatures in the *"Gulistan"* and *"Diwan-i-Hafiz"* both in the British museum.

Natural scenes especially hunting scenes and portraits were the favourite of Jahangir's paintings. These were painted with vivid realism. Jahangir was a great lover of nature and ordered such artists as Mansur and Murad to paint beautiful specimen of birds, animal and flowers. Painting of plants, cereepers, flowers, animals, birds and numerous other natural subjects reached the highest stage of development unusual flowers and rare animals were ordered to be copied or painted by Jahangir.

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32. Touchstone of Wisdom.

"During Jahangir's reign the number of artists had increased beyond the needs of the imperial atelier and Mughal trained painters of inferior merit were driven to seek a livelihood as commercial free lancers without regular patron. The work of such painters is styled as popular Mughal or provincial Mughal painting. This style of painting has all the important characteristics of the imperial painting but is inferior in quality".

Jahangir's deep interest in nature gave rise to the *"zoological portrait"*[33] similarly his love of flowers greatly influenced the use of flower in decorative art and margin painting which flourished at his atelier as a separate branch of painting. Indeed the illuminated margin now became an integral part of painting.

Jahangir seems to have preferred paintings representing contemporary events, experiences, etc. to those illustrating the classics and fables of India and Persia. These also appears to be shift in interest from manuscript illumination to portraiture and album painting. Moreover, the influence of western techniques increased greatly, especially the use of aerial perspective.

Jahangir had portraits made of his nobles which he gathered together in albums. Jahangir sent an artist to Iran especially to prepare portraits of Shah 'Abbas and his nobles'. He had similarly a number of portraits prepared of *Uzbek* rulers and nobles.

While copies of European paintings and engravings had already been made under Akbar, the interest in European painting seems to have increased considerably under Jahangir.

Sir Thomas Roe describes how Jahangir had several good copies made of a picture he had presented; the ambassador was hard put to distinguish the original from the copies.

The royal patron found in Mansur an artist to his heart who could faithfully caputre for him in line and colour the unusual flora and fauna which so much delighted him.[34]

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33. Related to Animals.

34. O.P. Sharma, Indian Miniatures exhibition complied from the collection of the National Museum, New Delhi, published, Brussels, Biblotheque Royal Albert 5-16 Oct. 1974.

Jahangir painters, who accompanied him everywhere, made drawing of birds and animals which caught the emperor's eye. In his diary he writes, *"although king Babur described in his memoirs the appearance and shape of several animals, he never ordered the painters to make pictures of them. As these animals appeared to me very strange, I both described them and ordered that painters draw them for the Jahangirnamah so that the amazement arising from hearing about them might be increased"*. Mansur was the painter who excelled in animal subjects in Jahangir's time. The emperor's own knowledge, not only of painting but also of the technical excellence of his painters, was so great that he could tell who had done the eyes, the hands, the landscape, and so on. This was a time of specialization, and as Mansur was the specialist for birds and animals and Farrukh Beg for traditional Persian motifs, so others also had their specialities.

In this reign the multiple signatures of the early reign disappeared and the miniature carried only one signature. In Jahangir's time, miniatures came to be made for preservation in folios rather than merely as book illustrations. Portraits became increasingly popular and Jahangir presented his portrait to all those he wished to honor. He also started the practice of having his courtiers wear miniatures of himself on a brooch that was attached to the front of the turban, a practice Shah Jahan followed. These are visible in some of the durbar scenes. Equestrian portraits, a purely Indian innovation since they are not found in Persian painting, were painted in great numbers.

The great love of the Mughal for creating gardens gave the painter a chance to study and paint various species of flowers. To these paintings he brings botanical expertise as well as an elevating sense of colour and rhythm. These flower studies were made in large numbers during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan.

Shah Jahan's reign *(1628-1658)* was marked by a dazzling magnificience. The empire was now firmly established and the resources of the whole country were at the disposal of the *"Great Mughal"*,[35] who could indulge in

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35. Emperor Shah Jahan.

his love of opulent display to his heart's content. The artists worked in the tradition of the earlier reign, but their work is distinguished by far greater use of gold and colour. The miniatures, showing slightly overelaborate court scenes, are a reflection of the tastes of the builder of the Taj Mahal, *"the poem in marble"*[36].

Together with the lavishness of the court is the ever present mystic element. The stark realism of the earlier reign is replaced by scenes of holy men and portraits that reveal psychological insight, and the profile replaced the earlier three quarters face. Even the durbar scenes show, with very few exceptions, rows, of faces in profile.

Shah Jahan's own love was architecture, and the beautiful building of his time are an index of his taste. Perhaps because his taste extended to the elaborate, the fabulous stone-encrusted peacock throne, on which the emperor sat, became legend in his time, but the emperor did not seem to have taken any particular interest in painting. There is no record of the frank delight in art that his father found. It was inevitable, therefore, that from this time Mughal painting should show a definite decline. The delineation of detail, the fine brushwork and careful drawing are still present, but an element of stiffness and formalism forms a marked contrast to the fluid quality of the earlier miniatures.

Most of the works produced at Shahjahan's atelier (1628-1658) consist of album pictures. The format of Jahangiri paintings, portraiture and margin painting, still remained in vogue, but there was markedly less innovation. The miniatures of Shahjahan's reign are characterized by replendent costumes, arms, and armour, ornamented columns, the abundant use of gold pigments and bright colours, contrasting strongly with the naturalism of Jahangiri paintings.

The album of Shahjahan's eldest son Dara Shukoh, has survived. The miniature representing ascetics and saints, both muslim and Hindu, reflect his catholic ideas; there are detailed studies too of birds animal and flowers

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36. One of the Architectural Wonders of the World.

But there was markedly less innovation. Miniature of Shah Jahan reign are characterized by resplendent costumes, arms and armors, ornamented columns, abundant use of gold pigment and bright colour, contrasting strongly with the naturalism of Jahangir's paintings. Flower studies were also done in large numbers. Shah Jahan's first love was architecture and the beautiful buildings of his time are an index of his taste. Perhaps because of his taste extended to the opulent, the fabulous stone-encrusted peacock throne on which the emperor sat, became legend in his time, but the emperor did not appear to have taken any special interest in paintings. There is no record of the frank delight in art that his father found. It was inevitable, therefore that from the age onward, Mughal painting should show definite decline. The delineation of details, the fine brush work and carefuly drawing are still present, but an element of stiffness and formalities is a marked contrast to the fluidity of the earlier miniatures.

Aurangzeb *(1658-1707)*, Shah Jahan's youngest son and the next emperor was a puritan who had very little interest in the art. His philosophy of life did not tolerate frivolity or pleasures of any kind. He appointed a *"muhtaseb"*.[37] He prohibited music and sternly discouraged styles of dress which he considered effimeniate. The splendour and luxuries of Shah Jahan's court were abolished and the palace was stripped of its luxurious trappings. Painting too suffered serverly he regarded its patterns oppose to sacred Islamic tenets. His portrait is painted in battles and seiges, he is shown almost as an old man. While the emperor laid an austere life in which even simple pleasure seem to have no part, his courtier indulged in all types of extravagances. This is reflected in the paintings of this period which is replete with music, drinking and love scenes and through scenes are rather contrived and the figures rigid, they continued to be painted during the succeeding reign also. Technique becames the looser figures more rigid, lines less restrained and colour more garish as the Mughal empire headed towards decay.

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37. Sensor of Morals.

Although Aurangzeb's portrait with his son and Shaisteh Khan and a hunting scene are among the finest Mughal paintings of their genres and suggest that he had a true feeling for the art, by 1668, when he promulgated restrictive religious ordinances, he virtually closed the royal atelier. As the empire declined the artist too travelled to other areas and sought patronage at other court. Earlier the courts that had alliances with the Mughals either had some Mughal artists working for them or had sent some of their own artists to be trained at the imperial atelier. The less talented artists set up stalls at bazaars and made paintings that had no links with the work ordered by the imperial patrons, often showing a remarkably primitive quality. The outstanding 17th century Mughal artists were Chitarman, Mohammad Nadir of Smarkhand, Mir Mohammad Hasim, Goverdhan, Bhagwati, Mansur, Manohar, Farrukh Beg and Hassan.

All facts and situations in our knowlege so far have established beyond doubt that Mughal paintings were surely a mughal court product, organized and developed from the beginning to the end by the emperor themselves. *"The imperial masters selected the themes or subjects. The thematic contents of the paintings are a reflection of the personal tastes, pride, pleasure, preferences, fashion, hobbies, temperament of the individuals kinds. In every sense Mughal painting was a court art".*[38]

The imperial mughal court presents the eloquent articulation of artistics activities in painting of an integrated form and style with a true sense of purpose and direction. The implication has been given credibility by an analysis of the paintings themselves, despite relative variations in styles and emphasis on the topics conditioned by the preferences and predilections of individual kings from Akbar to Aurangzeb. The colour schemes are also maintained with a common denominator as were the draughtmanship and character of design. It is therefore relatively easy for even a layman to be able to view a painting to judge whether its origins lie in the imperial Mughal atelier or not.

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38. Jamila Brij Bhushan, The World of Indian Miniatures.

Aurangzeb's indifference to painting might have been partly responsible for the decline that followed Shah Jahan. Nevertheless, the tradition did not come to an end; and the Mughal style largely influenced. Later school of painting such as those of *Awadh*[39] Lahore, Delhi, and Patna, it also influenced the hill schools and centres of painting in south India.

MY FINDING AND CRITICAL EVALUATION

All facts and situations known so far have established beyond doubt that the Mughal painting was essentially a product of the Mughal Court and that this art was organised and patronized from beginning to end by the emperor themselves. The artists were recruited and works were assigned to them by the emperors. They were paid and rewarded from the state treasury. Materials were obtained and purchased for them from far and near by the manager of the court atelier. It was in the royal library of manuscript and albums that the artists had their workshop.

Themes and subjects were selected by the imperial master rather than the artists themselves. Although the nobles of the imperial court occasionally advised them. The thematic contents of the paintings reflect the personal tastes and temperaments, prides and preferences, fashions, pleasures and pastimes of the individual imperial patterns and their courtly associates. Even in the form and style of the paintings, courtly tastes and preferences become themselves evidence to reveal the compositional scheme of court scenes, colour schemes and choice of colours.

The form and content of Mughal painting certainly is a departure from the collecting community tradition and the primary inspiration came from outside of the land to which the art belonged i.e. from Timurid and Safavid Iran. In Mughal court painting, what is more

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39. Lucknow and Allahabad.

important and more interesting is the fact that a common feature remains throughout to distinguish the form and style from earlier and later ones.

My study and analysis of Mughal painting also point to the fact that the artists had to conform to the common feature of style and form as long as they were in the employment of the imperial court. The more talented artists of the Mughal Court were kept engaged in carrying out the alloted assignments with the help of Junior colleagues. The well known, usual method was for the master artist to lay down the design sketch the outlines and indicate the colours. The junior associates handled the details of inner lines, shades and tonalities, usually more than one copy of an illustrated manuscript was made-one for the royal library and additional ones for gifts to diplomats and favourites.

The Mughal Court presents the articulation of artistic activities in the field of painting of a unified and integrated from and style with a sense of purpose and direction based as the themes and tastes of individual Mughal monarchs from Akbar to Aurangzeb. The narrative descriptive and dramatic aim remain constant throughout. The process of Indianization remained Irano Central Asia during the first two Mughals. From Akbar onwards, the Mughal court retained a strong Indian character, the reasons being obvious i.e. by religious affiliation the Mughal monarchs were Muslims.

They were closely tied to outside of India by social, political and commercial relations. At times of need materialistic, cultural and spiritual, they turned to the people of these areas for help and guidance. Persian alone was recognized as the sole language of the court and it was because of the choice of this language, the whole world of creative imagination of history and romance affected and conditioned the minds of the Mughal monarchs.

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I establish the opinion that though Babur was a learned and cultured man with sophisticated taste, there is no evidence that he actually founded an atelier of artists. Humayun was the first patron of Mughal painting. He acquainted himself with the studio of schools of leading artists. Akbar founded the painting atelier and Mughal school of painting came into existence and the art of painting in its general finish and boldness of execution reached perfection during his reign. Jahangir had a more developed artistic sense and my study confirms that painting under him was an autocratic art in which portraiture dominated with love of detail and fineness of drawing. Shah Jahan's rein was marked by dazzling magnificience and the artists works became more distinguished. The empire declined with Aurangzeb for his fanatism and artists migrated to other princely states and patrons.

It becomes highly identified now that the Hindu and Muslim artists at the Mughal court had 'representation' as the chief aim and concerned with the descriptive themes in a dramatic manner and in their utmost visibility. There is a great and authentic inference through my thesis with evidence of the introduction of elements from contemporary European painting and renaissance periods, christians myths and legends. In every aspect, Mughal painting was a court art, with a definite character, form and style, with a reflection of the personal tastes, prides, preferences, pleasure, temperament and hobbies of the individual kinds.

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Chapter II




Important Illustrations During Akbar's Reign

"The works of all painters are weekly laid before His Majesty by the Darogah. He then confers rewards according to the excellence of workmanship or he may increase the monthly salary"

Many of the paintings of the period were illustrations for books and thus the art of painting became intimately related to writing of books. Akbar, the most famous and enlightened Mughal ruler, introduced several changes in the art. He encouraged the painting of Hindu deities by Mughal artists. The most important development of his reign was however, the inauguration of portrait painting, a trend which continued for centuries thereafter.

The sixteenth century was a period of exciting happenings in Indian history. The ruling dynasty was completely annhilated by the Mughals and Babur established a vast empire. However, the arts and architecture, literature, music patronised by the erstwhile Delhi rulers had spread far and wide in India and flourished in numerous centres of Islamic culture.

Babur was a man of fine tastes and the admired music, painting, architecture and literature.

Succeeding Humayun, Akbar fortified the fledgling empire's foundation. His immense courage, strength of character, religious tolerance, reformer's spirit and able administation coupled with a discerning appreciation for arts makes him one of the greatest rulers of India. Having learnt to appreciate the delicacy of Persian painting in his boyhood, Akbar wisely did not want the Indian painters to merely imitate his Iranian counterparts, rather he wanted them to adopt their provincial schools within the parameters of painting.

The majority of the painting on display ranged in date from the mid 16th to the mid 19th centuries A.D. This period known in history as the *"late medieval age"*[1] saw Indian painting reach the zenith of glory. The advent of the Mughal rule in India brought with it *Turkish*, Persian art traditions and artists to Agra and Delhi.

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1. Old Fashioned Style of 5th-15th Century.

In fact, analysis of the illustrations of the *Qissa-i-Amir Hamza,*[2] painted at Akbar's atelier between 1562 and 1577, also apply to his own works now on view. That is why I have borrowed the little of his critical essay for this brief note. Let us recall his observations on the illustrators of the Hamza-Nama, who fused the Persian Safavid pictorial idioms with the provincial traditions from Rajasthan, Gujarat, Gwalior, Lahore and Kashmir: their task was "formulating a visual language commensurate with the vicissitudes of historical and material transition of an age." And this brings us to philosophical view of the time-structure of history as formulated by the great French medievalist art historian. *"History is a triple sheaf of active forces: tradition, influences, experiments".*[3]

That was the complex structure of *'historical present'* which Akbar's artists unconsciously revealed in their folios. And that is the complex structure of time that Sheikh consciously uses to evolve his own pictorial language and structures, varying according to different contexts.

Against the ugly emergence of narrow religious sectarianism which was now sprouting political sinews. Sheikh pictorially interpreted one of the great medieval saints, Kabir, whose devotional songs of mystical humanism are still sung and reponded to by millions of Indians. Abul Fazl, the official chronicler at Akbar's court, placed Kabir's time as during the reign of Sikander Shah Lodhi 1489-1519.

"The series of gouaches as Sheikh observed in connection with the Hamza-Nama relates to the polemics[4] of historical consciousness against a timeless tradition and concept of materiality against ideals of spiritualist persuasions".[5]

And as happened with the *Hamza-Nama* folios, inspiration and influence came from far and near: the Sienese, Ambrogio Lorenzetti Cactive (1319-47), Pieter Bruegel the elder from the Netherlands, from the ateliers of the great Mughals, and the Benode Behari Mukherji's epic mural. The lives of Hindi saints in the Hindi Bhavan, Santiniketan.

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2. Epic Stories in Persian.
3. Statement by Henri Foncillon (1881-1943).
4. The Art of Controversial Discussion.
5. Article from *"The Hindustan Times"*.

That Akbar was the founder of the Mughal school of painting is clearly seen in the illumination of the Hamza-Nama which is a repetoire of the adventures and romantic escapades of Hamza, the prophet's uncle in twelve volumes from which about 200 have survived, *"the illustrations of the Hamza show a dramatic precedence of the event, broad handling, deep expressive colours and love for landscape and architecture".*

Akbar himself supervised the atelier. Painters were rewarded by conferring awards and titles. *Farrukh Beg* and the Hindu articles-*Baswan and Daswanth* amongst others were the leading lights of the atelier.

Abu'l Fazl, the historian, also informs us that Akbar commissioned a huge portrait album, "whereby those who have passed away received new life and those who are still alive have immortality".[6]

The delicate miniatures teeming with flora and fauna are enchanting. The brush strokes and details are difficult to see with the naked eye.

To produce this mirror of life within a strictly limited space, the Indian painter used only the most rudimentary materials with which he was completely familiar and which were easily procurable.

The earlier known miniatures found in India are on a palm leaf, these were generally illustrations of the Jain Scripture date back to the eleventh century. Paper started being used in the early 14th century and by the 16th century it was produced in great amounts in India. The quality of the paper was identified by its place of manufacture; for example, *Daulatabadi*[7] and *Nizamshahi.*[8] The materials from which it was made also identified the paper; for example, Sanni-from flax, Manjaal from fishnets and nukaÿyar from water coloured paper. Other paper-making materials were bamboo, jute and waste silk cocoons.

The paper was smoothened by being dipped in a solution of alum, partly dried and then rubbed with agate or touchstone burnisher. Two and more layers of paper were glued together to obtain the requisite thickness.

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6. M.S. Randhawa, Mughal Painting, Panorama of Indian Painting. Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting government of India, May, 68.
7. From Daulatabad.
8. From Nizamabad.

An iron low pen, with brush-like, pointed projections on both sides was used by making straight lines on border for geometric patterns. Compasses were used to draw circles, and a flat ruler for drawing the lines on the border.

Manasdla,[9] lays down the rules to the employed while making painter pens. The tip of the small bamboo pen was attached to a small nail with only the tip extending, the rest embedded in the handle. This instrument might have been used for outlining designs on palm leaves.

The pencils used for making preliminary sketches were made from a ruler of cow dung, old powdered slag, water and made into a paste which was then modelled into 2"-4" long pencils. The colour was light and errors could be erased with a clean rag. Other kinds of pencils were made of lampblack and boiled rice.

A variety of brushes, of different sizes and thicknesses were used. They were made from the soft hair from the ears of donkeys, calves, bullocks, fibres, barks of certain trees. The finest brushes consisted of tail hair of cats, squirrels, goats and musbrats. An ideal brush head was neither too hard nor to soft and drew together when dipped in water.

The animal's hair was sheared, wetted, inserted through one end of a feather quill and drawn out from the other. The tips were tied to the quill and reinforced with melted shellac. Peacock and pigeon feather too were used as quills depending on whether thin or thick brushes were required. For very fine detailing, a single hair brush was used. An interesting fact is that those instrument are made to date and in the same form as they were used during Akbar's reign.

According to Brijbushan, Akbar was the real founder of Mughal painting. He was discerning judge of men and in recruitment ignored, caste, and creed and colour. The hundreds of painters in the royal atelier worked under the master *Abdus Samad* and *Mir Saiyyid Ali. Samad* was titled

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9. A Medieval Text.

'Shiren-a-Qalam'.[10] Abul Fazl states, *"His perfection was mainly due to the wonderful effect of a look of his majesty, which caused him to turn form that which is from to that which is spirit".*

Abu'l Fazl also tells that the *"the works of all painters were weekly laid before his majesty by the 'Darogah'. Akbar used to confer rewards according to the excellence of workmanship".*

Akbar was very fond of the tales of Amir Hamza, the prophet's uncle. The illustration of these stories, the *Hamza-Nama* was the first work entrusted to the Persian Master *Mir Saiyid Ali.* It contained 1400 pictures in volumes and the work was completed in 15 years. The paintings are of size 20"x27" and unlike other Mughal paintings, are painted on cloth. It depicts the legendary and romantic story of the prophet's uncle's love for the Persian king's daughter, of the wars he fought for the propagation of Islam, and for the final conversion of his enemies. The Persian flavour is extremely strong but Indian elements are erudent in the shape of faces or the vitality and majesty of an elephant. The Persian-Safari style is evident in the brilliant red and green colours are dominant, the eroded pink rocks and vegetation planes and blossoming plum and peach trees are remniscent of Persia. Akbar's interest in the various religions led him to the Hindu classics and he ordered the artists to illustrate the *Ramayana*[11] and the *Mahabharata*[12].

Akbar had independent views and indeed he considered painting to be one of the means to recognize god. Similarly the lines written about the perfection of *'Abdus Samad'* skill in the *Ain-i-Akbari*[13].

The regard with deep respect which Mughal painters had for the Persian evident on the pages of the *Dastan-i-Amir-Hamza.* These paintings are the first known examples of Akbari art forms.

This is a beautiful painting from *Hamza Namah.* This is an unrecorded leaf from the earliest illustrated work of the Mughal period, which is also its largest and most extensive one. Its chronological place has recently been

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10. Sweet Pen.
11. Hindu Religious Epics.
12. Hindu Religious Epics.
13. Institutes of Akbar.

more accurately established by *Rai Krishnadasa* and *Basil Gray*. The great efforts of the 50 painters who produced the 1400 paintings on cloth in the fourteen volumes were greatly appreciated by contemporary and later writers; their judgment is shared by modern connoisseurs.

When this painting was remounted in recent years, the inscription below it and the text on paper on its reverse were covered up so that the details of the story can no longer be established. A photograph made before the restoration provided, however, the caption.

The anonymous painter avoided the pitfalls sometimes found in the illustrations of the *Hamza Namah*, such as over-crowding, an all-too-detailed architectural setting, oddly disproportionate figures or their puppetlike presentation. Here the action is concentrated in one area, set in juxtaposition to the calm outside the palace walls; the slightly larger size of the prison-keeper and of the figures around him is not disturbing, as it stresses their importance; and finally, well-expressed movements and sentiments of the main actors leave no doubt that we take part in a dramatic event, though the more passive figures, like the minor attendants and the prisoners, are still treated like puppets. The heavy Maltas, the prison-keeper, listening with disbelief and boredom, is remarkably portraitlike and forms a vivid contrast to the emphatic gesture of the dark-skinned, *Zardhank Khatni* and even more so to the wild movements of the figure turning his head in the courtyard. All this is presented with the dynamic quality, bursting energy, and love for detail which distinguishes this manuscript. One can also observe that the figures are clothed in unadorned carpets and tilework reflect mid-16th century Persian art. The scene is iconographically related to one in the Bharat Kala Bhavan.

At least 26 pages of the *Hamza Namah* are known to be in America: five in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, four in the Brooklyn Museum, three in the Freer Gallery, two each in the Boston Museum, in the collection of J.F. Lewis, Philadelphia, and in another private collection, and one each in

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the Art Institute of Chicago, the Fogg Museum, Cambridge, the Cincinnati and Philadelphia Museums of Art, the Philadelphia Free Library, the Kevorkian Foundation, New York, and the collections of G.P. Bickford, Cleveland, and S. Minkenhof, New York. Most of these belonged to the album which General R.K. Monif bought from a sister of the Shah of Iran in 1912; of these 25 came to the United States and were sold at auction in New York in 1923.

The miniatures of the *Anwar-i-Suhaili*[14] are based on typically Indian parameters, among only a few Persian characteristics. In the Mughal collection, the Hamza paintings are unique for the action shown in them. Approximately 200 folios of its are presented in the various collections at Brooklyn BMVA, Vienna CB and Varanasi.

Painting, during Akbar's reign was generally restricted to manuscript illustration. The most well known being the *Hamza, Diwan, Gulistan, Darab Nama Khamsa of Amir Khamsa* etc. Several Hindu manuscripts were also illustrated.

The *Gita Govinda* is a sanskrit poem written in the twelth century by *Jayadeva,* a poet at the court of the last Sena king-Lashmanasena. Court painters of the grand Moghul summed up the position when admirably he said- *"If Mughal art is less interesting from the aesthetic point of view it has a fascinating human interest of its own and real charm".*

Akbar's interest in Indian literature contributed to the transcedension of the Mughal school from its Persian beginnings into an indigeneous tradition. The Hindu painters fused their provincial skills with the Persian features, with the Indian tradition dominating.

The *Ain-i-Akbari* of Abul Fazl and *Munlaktab-ut-Tawarikh* state that Akbar ordered the translation of illustration of the *Gita-Govinda.* It was however an extremely popular treatise illustrated in various provincial styles.

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14. Persian Knight Stories.

"The colour like in the majority of Akbar period miniature is strong and variated in effect and yet a mellowness pervades the pictures due to the harmony of the colour scheme and colour proportions. As Coomaraswamy *"point devoted primarily to the hero, heroine and the Sakhi. The Sakhi not only bears messages between the lovers and discusses situations with them, but also speaks for the heroine in many places".*[15]

A MUGHAL MINIATURE

A woman figure is rarely seen in Mughal miniatures. Even when they are assigned any place, conspicuous or otherwise, the authenticity of their features is seldom beyond dispute. The seldom comes across a painting showing or mirroring the literary artistic activities of women in Mughal India.

The miniature is in many ways a unique specimen of Mughal art. The delicacy and fineness of brushwork, combined with the entity of such a subject in the development of Mughal painting easily assign to the miniature an important place in any art gallery.

After prince Salim's birth (1569 AD), in the 14th reignal year from Agra to Fatehpur Sikri, contemporary sources and researchers which have already been conducted in Mughal painting history, help us deduce that the felt manuscripts were illuminated at Fatehpur Sikri, apart from the mural painting that decorated some of the buildings of the new capital.

The most important manuscript illustrated during the period of Akbar are the *Gulistan of Sadi, Anwar-i-Suhaili, Razm Nama, Tuti Nama etc.* -

Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuria *(1573-74 A.D.)* calligraphed in beautiful and bold Nastaliq script, this manuscript consists of 112 relatively large manuscript paintings. This information is recorded on one of the manuscripts leaves. It records the history of Timur and his descendants upto the 22nd reignal year of Akbar (1578 AD) and the information given to us by *Shahjahan,*

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15. S.P. Verma, Art and Material culture in the painting of Akbar's court, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Kanpur.

who had recorded an autographic note to this effect on the fly leaf at the beginning of the manuscript. As per the catalogue of the Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library, Patna, which owns the manuscript, *"the history of the house of Timur breaks immediately after the account of Akbar's second campaign in Gujarat in the 19th year of his reign. The history of the 20th, 21st and 22nd years is wanting."*[16]

In the manuscript itself, the author's name is not mentioned, neither is the works title - the latter is only known from later endorsement. The artists names are given at the bottom of the paintings, but, sadly, the binder has carelessly left out most of the signature portions of the paintings. Yet the names of the 53 paintings can be clearly read:

Daswant, Basawan, Madhav Kalan, Kesu, Anant, Sahu, Surjiv Gujarati, Devji Gujarati, Premjiv Gujarati, Naman, Minah, Bihzad, Madho Khurd, Lal, Mukund, Khem, Jagannath, Sanwla, Ramdas, Sarwan, Nanha, Tulsi Kalan, Tulsi Khurd, Nand Gawaliari, Dhannu, Bhurah, Dharmdas, Kanak, Asi, Bhagwan, Surjan, Surdas-son of Isar Bhimjiv Gujarati, Sankar, Jagan, Narayan, Kanihya, Kheman Sangterash, Mituhara, Paras, Khemkaran, Manohar, Lohenga or Longa, Mulla Shah Muhammad, Hussain Naqqash, Mohammad Kashmiri, Haidar Kahsmiri, Kamal Kashmiri, Mukhlu, Farukh, Miskin-son of Mukhlis.

Since this manuscript appears to have been left incomplete in the 19th or 20th year of Akbar's reign, one may assume that the appointments of the aforementioned artists were made during the first fifteen years of Akbar's reign. Obviously, a lot of them must have illustrated the *Hamza* too. Incidentally, this is the earliest manuscript with a knowledge where we find, from the signatures written, that more than a single artist worked on the same painting as was the usual practice in the Mughal court, which must have been fashionable when the *Hamza* was being illuminated.

One of the typical paintings of the manuscript is that which depicts the presentation of Amirzada Mohd's. sons at a place called Uni. Amirzada was

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16. Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in the Oriental Public Library, Bankipur, Vol. VII, Indian History, No. 551. The Second phase (Fatehpuri Sikri Studio c.1575-85 AD, History and Analysis of Painting.

Timur's predecessor. This is now in the Khuda Baksh Library, Patna.

Gulistan-i-Sa'di *(1581 A.D.)*: There is a copy of this Illustrated manuscript at Royal Artistic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, London. An entry on the very last page shows that it was calligraphed and painted in 1581 AD at Fatehpur Sikri by *Mohammad Hussain Kashmiri*, entitled *'Zarrin Qalam'* at the Royal court. The manuscript consists of 130 folios, every page of which is decorated with paintings of a variety of flora and fauna. Each page is also richly powdered with gold.

Under the text of the last page, there is a painting showing two men, one nearing 40-45 years holding a pen on a piece of paper, clearly in the process of writing the portrait of *Husain Zarrin Qalam* and other, a relatively younger man of about 16 yrs, also with pen and paper. Both are sitting on a carpet and are attended by a male servant.

Clearly, these two are portrait figures. The elderly one is of *Hussain Zarrin Qalam* and the younger is of *Manohar* who later became a painter too. Basil Gray has pointed out that *"A comparison with a second portrait of the same painter by Daulat in the Murraqq-i-Gulshan in the Teharan Museum reveals a definite resemblance of features"*.[17]

Portrait painting, happens to be one of the greatest heights that Mughal paintings scaled in the Indian art history. Truly, portraiture appears to have invoked great interest in the Mughal emperors, especially Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan. It's well known that Akbar repeatedly sat for his portrait to be painted and also ordered the portraites of all the grandees of his realm. As a result, a unique portrait album thus gradually built-up and Abu'l Fazl was pleased to remark that *"those that have passed away have received a new life and those who are still alive have immortality promised them"*.[18] From the portraits that we can still study, it appears that Jahangir and Shahjahan both followed Akbar's foot-steps in this regard.

But the evidence of portraiture as a genre of painting is not simply to be viewed in formal portraits alone. Even in historical narrature illustrations,

17. Ashton, Leigh, the art of India and Pakiastan. A commmemorative catalogue of the exhibition held, at the Royal Academy of Arts, London 1947-48. Painting by Gray Basil, p.143.

18. The second phase: (Fatehpuri Sikri Studio c.1575-85 AD), History and Analysis of Painting.

depicting crowded court scenes, one can cleary note the utmost care and attention with which the individual faces and features were drawn and painted, drawing out not only the physiological but also the psychological characteristics. There is, hence, no doubt that the human faces were not of prototype but of human individuals who were identifiable.

Its common knowledge that classical *Persian* painting also had known of portraiture, and that *Bihzad* and *Sultan Mohammad* were superior portrait painters. The Mughal atelier derived its inspiration in form and technique of portrait painting from the Persian traditions.

Viewing the long gallery of portraits in Akbari paintings, one concretely concludes that the Persians could not have been the source of ideological and formal inspiration of the Mughal painters in this context. Persian portraiture shows human types and not individuals. It's primary objective was the creation of a mood and attitude and this was achieved through mannered poses. Technically, the paintings are two-dimensional and rest primarily on fine, linear draughtsmanship and secondarily on contrasts of flat application of colours.

Such portraits in the Persian style are not unknown even in Akbari paintings. There is not doubt that such portraitures were the handi-work of the Persian artists in the Mughal atelier by Indian artists schooled to copy the Persian method and manner.

Broadly speaking, however, Mughal portraiture was quite different from the Persian. From the very beginning, one notes a clear predilection for the rounded, three-dimensional volume in portraiture, modelled lines with shading and that variation of colour. But the important point is that the portraits objective is not to depict types but aims to represent certain individuals with careful efforts towards individual forms and features and bringing out the typical psychological characteristic of each figure. The two portraits that can be seen in the painting being discussed are surely not in the best and finest tradition of Mughal portraiture, but they definitely are

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of the same class.

Abul Fazl states that *"Basawan was one of the most skilled portrait artists in Akbar's atelier—he excelled in drawing human features and important painting Numerous paintings of the Akbari period show that were many others also of equal calibre. The naturalism that is typical of the landscapes in Mughal painting, is a the characteristic quality of Mughal portraiture. They are so true-to-life as to be identifiable even after so many centuries".*[19]

One now questions as to what was the source of inspiration for the Mughal artist as regards to portraiture. Classical and medieval Indian art did not know portraiture in the respect of individualisation of features. Ancient Indian art knew of portrait statues, inscribed as such, but one all know that these sculptures represented human ideals and not individuals. Yet the Ajanta and elsewhere frescoes, these are scattered examples where one sees very careful and fruitful attempts at individualisation of features and captivating psychological expressions. One can state confidently that these were character studies made of not on the spot, then certainly after very careful and continuous observation. Its likely that the Indian artists in Akbar's atelier knew of this tradition and drew from this source.

But it appears that a more likely source was the contemporary European Renaissance portraiture. If the question of the medium is ignored for the time being, one notices the striking similarity of the ideological approach between Renaissance portrait painting and the Mughal portraiture. Both emphasize the three-dimensional volume, detailed and careful attention to details, the same stress laid on individualisation of features and the psychological characteristic.

The naturalism and treatment that characteristics Akbari landscape and portraiture also characteritics the presentation and treatment of animals, birds, flowers and foliage and the tones are to be found in the illustrations of the *Gulistan-i-Sa'di*. Truely, the concept of portraiture of birds and animals which later evoked great interest in Jahangir came directly from human

19. Azad, Muhammad Husain, Darbar-i-Akbari, Lahore, 1921.

portraiture literated by Akbar.

The Gulistan's example referred to here is perhaps one of the earliest attempts at portraiture and thus, is not a very sophisticated piece; but it was surely an excellent beginning, which therefore justifies the attention given to it.

Tarikh-i-Alfi *(1582-90 A.D.)*: It is a well known fact that the first day of the Muslim calendar is the day of the flight of the Prophet Mohammad. Akbar issued an order that stated that a new history of Islam should be written by calculating the dates from the date of the Prophet's death and not from the date of his flight. The new history was called *Tarikh-i-Alfi*,[20] ie he wanted the reckoning of the date not as A.H, but as A.D.

From, the Islamic point of view, this was a revolutionary step. One also estimates that Akbar could not have done this until he had an example of the reckoning of an era from the date of birth or death of a religious prophet. Clearly, the prophet whose example was taken was Christ and the reckoning christianity. If one keeps in mind, Akbar's relationships with Portugese padres and christianity, his popularisation of christian myths and legends in his court, especially the atelier, this decision of Akbar is justified. However, seven persons namely:- *Naqib Khan, Shah Fateullah, Hakim Hamarm, Hakim Ali, Haji Ibrahim Suhindi, Mirza Nizamuddin Ahmad and Badauni* were entrusted the task of writing the historical events year by year, beginning from the day of the death of Prophet Muhammad and it was decided to end it by 1592 AD, the thousandth year of Prophet Mohammad's flight.

However, it appears that the manuscript never finished. The folios of the Imperial copy are to be found in the British Museum, the cleveland Museum and the Freer gallery. Most of the surviving illustrations belong to early Islamic history.

Razm Nama *(1582-89 A.D.)* Badauni in his *Muntakhi-butta-warikh*, describes the event of 1582, among the remarkable events of this year to the translation

20. World History.

of *Mahabharata,* which is one of the most famous of Hindu books, and contains all types of stories and moral reflections and advice, and matters relating to conduct and manners, religion, and science and accounts of the religions sects and mode of worship, in the form of a history of the wars of the tribes of Kurus and Pandus, who were the rulers of Hind, according to some more than 4000 years ago, and according to common account more than 80,000.

The Persian translation was completed by the team of *Naqib Khan, Abudul Qadir Badauni and Sharkh Sultan Thanesari.* As per the preface of this book by Abul Fazl, the work was finished in 1589 AD. Presently, it is preserved in the collection of the city Palace Museum, Jaipur. A handsome sum of rupees 4,00,000/- was paid to the illustrators. The manuscripts consists of 169 full size paintings on a variety of subjects and styles. The painters names are inscribed in the margin of the illustrations by the record officer's clerk.

There are four other pages from the *Razm Namah's* copy dated 1007AH/ 1598 AD in the Baroda Museum, illustrated by *Dhannu, Pak, Naryan and Khaiman.* According to Basil Gray, these pages are from a dispersed album sold in 1921 in London. Three folio in the prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, volume twelve in the collection of *Sir Akbar Haidari,* three at the British Museum and another three in the Victoria and Albert Museum are scattered folios of the same copy. It's unknown whether the folios of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, are from the original copy or from some other. Anybody who has viewed the original *Razm Namah*[21] folios will be impressed by the Indianness that characterises these paintings. The reasons are not hard to decipher. Firstly, the myths and legends narrated in line and colour are basically Indian. The landscape, environs, the characters, apparel are all Indian. It is obvious that the artists must have made deliberate efforts to give an Indian feeling to the painting, visually.

Besides, there were more important reasons for the Indianness of form and feeling. In the Jaipur copy, there as about 14 miniatures which are painted

21. Persian Translation of Mahabharata.

horizontally instead of vertically on the broad side of the book's spine. The paintings are therefore at right angles to the Persian text. This alignment is very similar to the traditional palm leaf manuscripts, a point made very ably by Basil Grapy.[22]

Apart from this, the composition of the paintings is rich and crowded, quite unlike the illustrations of the Hamza series but the more important factor is the three-dimensional character of the painting created by the use of shaded lines and colour tonality. The style appears to be a legacy of the remains of the Indian classical tradition of illustration. There are practically non-existent traces of other West-Indian or pre-Mughal Rajasthani painting of medieval India.

Darab Namah the illuminated manuscript of Persian legendary romance, copied and illustrated in Akbar's court is now at the British Museum. It carries no date. But Basil Gray believes that *"there is some reason to think that the text of the Darabnamah was written before 1583, but the larger number of miniatures would take several years to complete. Some of the painters whose names are written below the miniatures of the Darabnamah are of Lahore which became the principal imperial seat after the abandonment of Fatehpur Sikri in 1585-86".*[23]

However, he did not give any reason as to why he feels that the illustration of the manuscript was completed at Lahore. Apart from this, one of paintings is by *Abdus Samad* and the better ones by artists like *Miskin, Bhurah, Nanha and Kanha* who were recruited very much earlier and were already established as artists and had worked on earlier manuscripts, there seems to be no reason to say that the illustrations of the *Darab Namah* could not be painted at Fatehpur Sikri Studio.

Mughal paintings are a class by themselves, unique as compared to all other styles and techniques of the pre-Mughal or contemporary Indian art. Akbar was the foremost Mughal monarch who paid special attention to the art of painting manuscripts following Mongol and Timurid examples.

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22. Ashton, Leigh, the art of India and Pakistan (a commemorative catalogue of the exhibition held at the Royal Academy of arts, London, 1947-48, "Painting" by Basil Gray.
23. Barrett, D. and Gray B., Painting of India, Skira, 1963.

The work during his reign was mainly done by the Persian. *Mir Saiyid Ali* and *Khwaja Abdus Samad,* assisted by side artists. A few works seem to have to drawn by *Basawan.*

Akbar set up the Mughal school of Painting. The royal atelier was lavished upon under his own supervision. He preferred bright colours, like those seen in the Persian paintings. The human faces were drawn in profile and there was a lack of proportion in the delineation of human figures.

We still do not know whether the *"Popular Mughal"*[24] paintings were made prior to Jahangir's reign. This was not so with the Mughal paintings made for the court nobles. The royal library determined the parameters for the lesser establishment of the great Mughal officer. As these officers could not match the emperor's resources, their production lacked in inspiration and sophistication. It was due to the modest works that the portrait of Mughal style and finesse reached the provincial courts where paintings drawn had the characteristic features of what in the recent years has been termed as the *'Popular Mughal'.*

"It was under Akbar that a recognizable Mughal style was born. The product that emerged was new and of a different style which synthesized the Hindu Rajput and Muslim India elements with those of the royal safavid of Iran. All these traits seem to be equally favoured. Indian features reflected the attitude and likes with which the Mughals were already familiar. The Indian style was however more attractive because of their newness and the marked contrast with the ultra-sophistication and subtlety of the Iranian works in which colours were set onto the page like jewels in mounts and high drama conveyed by the raising of an eyebrow. His invention of portraiture and the shift of subjects, away from the religious and poetic texts common to both Hindus and Muslim traditions and towards historical scenes and natural history subjects are major innovations of Akbar. Paintings from the sixteenth century on the mid-seventeenth concentrated on naturalism and in particular on portraiture".[25]

Very many accounts of Akbar's importance to Indian arts have been penned

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24. Provincial Mughal Painting.
25. M.C. Beach-grand Mughal Imperial Painting in India contributions by Stuart Cary Welch and glend, Lowry, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Inst; William Stone, Asia House gallery, New York, between April 19-June 10, 1979.

down. One recent work describes the Emperor's relationship with his artist by saying that *"he was an extremely creative person. Akbar inspired the painters who gave form to his vision"*.[26]

In another place, the *Dastan-i-Amir Hamza* or the *Hamza Nama* was characterized as: *"A vision of the world through the eyes of a lion and the lion of course was Akbar"*.[27]

Abul Fazl also describes the excellence of the Hindu artist Daswant whom Akbar considered the best among his Indian painters. *"One day, the eye of His majesty fell on him; his talent was discovered, in a short time, he surpassed all painters and became the first master of the age"*.[28]

The first primary manuscript commissioned by Akbar is the *Hamza Nama*, supervised by *Mir Saiyid Ali* and *Abdus Samad*. These paintings are absolutely different from any work previously done in Iran by these two Persian artists.

The comparison of a Hamza illustration of a Hamza painting with those done by *Mir Saiyid Ali* in Iran, is an excellent means to define the innovations with which Akbar is credited. The illustrations of *Mir Saiyid Ali* are the most familiar and often exhibited of all Persian paintings.

Abdus Samad, the second director of the project, was a little conventional in his approach prior to the time when according to Abu'l Fazl, *"life was stirred to new heights by the alchemy of Akbar's vision, and he turned from outer form to inner meaning"*.[29]

Akbar met the Europeans for, the first time in 1572. The meetings were significant for arts, because Akbar was exposed and intrigued by European prints and paintings which were studied by his atelier. *Dasawanth* was specially important to Akbar, though he committed suicide.

With his death and the founding of the *Din-i-Illahi*[30], Akbar's own attitude changed for the quieter, the more rational.

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26, 29. Milo Cleveland Beach, Early Mughal Painting, Published for the Asia Society by Harvard University, Published Cambridge, London, England, 1987.

27. Stuart Cary Welch, the art of Mughal India precious object, New York Asia Society, 1963.

28. Ibid.

30. Religion Introduced by Akbar.

The record office established in 1574 was extremely important. Every happening in the Emperor's life was noted down by 14 clerks.

Although without any date or name of scribe, the *Darab Nama* (155 miniatures) can be assigned to Lahore, shortly after Akbar moved there in 1585.

Akbar wanted his painters to capture the typical appearance of the painting's subjects. To do this, he went completely against Islamic tenets which state that- *"the painting of a picture of any living thing is strictly forbidden, and is one of the greatest sins because it implies a likeness to the creature of God".*[31]

As a sort of reply to this, one day, at a private party, Akbar remarked, *"there are many that hate paintings, but such men I dislike. It appears to me as if a painter had quite peculiar means of recognizing God, painter, in sketching anything that has life, and in devising its limbs, one after the other, must come to feel that he cannot bestow individuality upon his work, and is thus forced to think of God, the giver of life and will thus increase in knowledge".*

Akbar Nama the illustrations of the *Akbarnama* form the last group of the miniatures painted at Akbar's court. Only three copies of the *Akbar Nama* are known to exist presently:- In the *Sir Chester Beatty collection, the victoria* and *Albert Museum, South Kensington Calarke MSS No.117; and the British Museum, London.*

The *Akbar Nama* is a detailed history of Akbar's reign comprising Akbar's birth, geneaology of Timurids, reign of Babar and Humayun. Akbar's reign from the mid 17th year to the end of the 46th. The *Chester Beatty* copy was purchased from Quaritch in 1923. Probably this is one of the volumes carried off into Persia by Nadir Shah from the Royal Library of Delhi.

"The whole manuscript has been rebound and the folios are set with broad margins of paper which is of a lighter shade than the original sheets".

The manuscript which is at the *Victoria and Albert Museum* has survived and is in a relatively good condition though mutilated towards the end. It

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31. Mario Bussagli, Indian Miniatures, edition 1969, the Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd.

has 461 folios and Emperor Jahangir's autograph. Those of the miniature are full page and a few a double spreads. Margins are plain with a band of lines edging the miniatures displaying names of 52 painters.

Like the *Razam Nama*, the illustrations of the Akbarnama are majorly creations of joint artists.

Several artists were employed at the court to accomplish the great treasure of Mughal miniature a part of which is known to this day. Abu'l Fazl has mentioned a brief list of artists comprising of seventeen names only.

Under the present study, a few selected manuscripts belonging to different periods and varying in their themes ie. fables, literary and historical works have been taken. These include *Anwar-i-Suhaili, Diwan-i-Hafiz, Razm Nama, Trikik-i-Baluri, Akbar Nama* and *Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuriya*. Several copies of these manuscripts contained with illustrations have survived from which it is evident that a number of copies were prepared on demand. Subsequently, the dates of their completion varied. The manuscripts were adorned with rich bindings and miniatures. A lot of money must have been incurred in the work of illuminating these manuscripts.

For example, the *Razma Namah* with it's preface dated AD 1588, now at Jaipur is said to have cost 40,000 sterling, and *colonel Tranna* estimates that his copy of the *Ramayana*, now a Washington, *"must have cost quite half that sum"*.

"The manuscript of Diwan-i-Hafiz in the collection of Sir Chester Beatty is the earliest dated manuscript known to us. The date of the colophon name of the copiest is given Abd-al-Samad".

"Format of the present copy is 14x90 cm and the written surface measures 7.5 cm x 4.5 cm. A full page contains two columns of 9 lines. It is written in beautiful nastaliq style on light brown paper, folio 7 contains full page miniatures. Throughout the volume, there are a number of scattered columns of birds illustrations

generally drawn in pairs and among the foliage. Among them are the blue jay, the green pigeon etc".

The illustrated chronicles have proved of greater interest of which the miniatures of *Tuzuk-i-Baburi*[32] have attracted the most of the critics.

It may be taken the richest collection of Akbari art as we come across the greatest number of its copies, survived to this day. The original member called *Tuzuk-i-Baburi* was written in the Turkish language and covers the biography of its author from his childhood.

Of the several translations of the *Tuzuk-i-Baburi* that by *Abdul Rahim Khankhanan*, the scholar-general of the Akbar's court is the most complete and best known. It was made and presented finally to the king in 1590. In 1583, however one *Paiyanda Hasan* of Ghazna and *Mohd. Quli* of Hisar had taken up the work of translation privately.

These were not completed and the originals are in the Libraries of the *British Museum* and the *Bodelian Library* respectively.

The Mughal miniatures on the whole or even those of the time of Akbar are entirely bereft representations of the lower sections of society, the middle class man, the cultivators, saints etc. In fact, the illustrations of the well-known *"dastans"*[33] are extensive stores of information relating to the common man. To these books, the artist was indebted in so far as he drew action for a seal.

Ramayan *(1589 A.D.):* The emperor commissioned Persian translations of the two great Hindu epics in Sanskrit (*Mahabharata and Ramayana* in Jaipur) and his artists worked on illustrated versions of them alongside the historical works. The manuscripts are on the grandest scale with an average of 150 full paintings each.

The Nymph Rambha Approaches Visvamitra: This is a miniature from a manuscript of the Persian translation of the *Ramayana*. According to a long

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32. Memoirs of Babur.
33. Long Stories.

Persian inscription on the flyleaf by its erstwhile owner, the great general and scholar *ʿAbd ar-Rahim, Muhammad Bairam*, the *Khan-e Khanan*, it was made for him as a copy of Akbar's own manuscript. The volume now look the final pages, but the inscription states that it had originally 135 paintings. Of these 130 are preserved though some in a damaged or worn condition. The flyleaf carries various further entries and two seals of officials of Shah Jahan, one with the date corresponding to 1638/39. In 1890 the volume formed part of an exhibition held in London of "Indo-Persian" pictures and manuscripts belonging to *Col. H.B. Hanna*. In 1907 the manuscript was bought by *Charles Lang Freer* of Detroit and was given by him together with his large collection of Oriental and American art to be part of the national museum bearing his name in Washington.

According to the inscription on the flyleaf, the manuscript was started in 1587/88. As Bada'uni completed his translation only in 1591, this would mean, if correct, that each part was at once copied and illustrated after the translator had finished his work. In any case the manuscript took several years to complete as the *Khan-e-Khanan* states that it was finished only in A.D. 1598/99. The miniatures are possibly in a slightly earlier style as they copy Akbar's version. While the manuscript was being prepared, the *Khan-e-Khanan* was Governor of Jaunpur, then of Multan and Bhakkar, from where he conquered Sind. Later on the directed military operations in the Deccan. It seems, however, that this has little bearing on the solution of the problem where the manuscript could have been made, as the Imperial model would have hardly been taken to a more distant place and was probably closely followed.

The 130 miniatures are in various styles and of different quality, and they range from rather simple paintings to most elaborate ones. The one here illustrated has no signature or attribution. Although the combination of cypress and almond trees, the forms of the rocks and the body of water in the foreground are originally Persian themes, the all-over treatment, the colour and spirit of the painting are Indian. The juxtaposition of the two

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figures in the verdant landscape is rather dramatic, especially in view of the bright, hot colours of the would-be seducer's garments and the ring of flames which, though it being summer, the ascetic has lighted as a form of penance.

Hanuman carries the mountain of healing herbs: this miniature shows how Hanuman brings the top of a Himalayan mountain with healing plants, so that the killed and wounded of the army of monkeys and bears would be restored to life. The two-dimensional and decorative treatment has a Persian quality, but the iconography and the lyricism of the landscape are quite Indian. Hanuman, bounding into the sky, the restrained yet varied delineation of nature and the delicate colours combine to make this an unusually appealing painting.

This miniature is one of the 50 in the volume with an attribution at the lower edge, on the protective leaf covering the miniature, or in one case in the painting itself. The following list gives the names of twelve artists together with the numbers of their paintings: *Fadil, Kaleh Bahar, Kamal, Muhan, Mushaffaq, Nadim, Nadir, Qasim, Sadi, Shyam Sunder, Yusuf Ali and Zain al-Abidin.* Three further names are illegible. In each case only one name is given. Only five or six of the artists are known from other manuscripts, some of the names are common or, in the case of *Shyam,* it is here combined with *Sundar,* it is therefore uncertain whether these are the artists already known. Also, none of them occurs in the list of 17 artists mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari.* Unlike the attributions in practically all other Akbari manuscripts, here more names are Muslim. Finally, while the inscription of the *Khan-e-Khanan* on the flyleaf mentions no specific artists, it states that *"the work was finished under the supervision of Maula Shikabi Imami".* This was a much appreciated poet; as such he is dealt with in the *A'in-e-Akbari* and mentioned in the *Ma'athir al-Umara'.*

These data lead one to the following conclusions: the *Khan-e-Khanan* apparently employed mostly different artists from those working in the

Imperial studios; he recruited them primarily among his coreligionists (possibly because he was not induced quite as strongly as Akbar to do otherwise out of religious and political consideration); this being a minor workshop which furthermore took the imperial manuscript as model, it was not thought necessary to have two or three artists join forces to get a complex, versatile and highly finished picture; and finally, it was, for the same reasons, considered sufficient to have a well-liked poet as head of the studio, rather than a professional scribe or painter, as, e.g., Bihzad had been in the library of Shah Tahmasp Safavi.

While several other Hindu classics were translated into Persian on Akbar's instigation, the *Ramayana* must have been particularly dear to him, as shown by the fact that he issued a half mohur gold coin with the figures of Rama and Sita, the heroes of the epic.

Anwar-i-Suhaili *(1570 A.D.):* This manuscript, a book of fables, dated 1570 AD and belongs to the collection of the *school of oriental and African studies, University of London.* It is important in the sense that this is the only illustrated manuscript of the early Mughal period which is dated and shows the starting of Indian naturalism introduced into a Persian background. The flush-cut composition is the principal characteristic of these painting as can be seen in the following two selected folios.

i) Monkey and bears.

ii) Monkey.

It seems that initially for the text matter some more space on the left side of the folios was given by the margin drawer, but perhaps the space for the requisite illustration was later felt to be insufficient. Consequently the original middle margin were erased. The impression still exist and can be clearly seen. But in both the compositions two major elements namely the landscape and the animal figuration need to be noticed. The general treatment of hillocks, the use of decorative as well as spray type trees

going beyond the margin provides enough proof to show that the art appear to be influenced by Persian traditional norms.

In the context of human figuration there is the figure of a lady in the centre of the first picture which is traditionally rendered in the Champachasika style with the transparent odhini, blouse and skirt, the slight modeling of the face and troso similar to the Hamza's type. The appearance of big ear rings signifies the fashion in vogue in Eastern U.P. As such it is supposed that the artist belonged to the same region and was conversant with the indigenous, provincial style of painting.

Basawan, in his composition depicts a synthetic manner in using the contemporary Hamza's style and fusing it western chirascuro. This can be particularly noted in the shading of the figure holding a page, in the centre. However *Basawan* could not maintain a dynamic character by a imparting certain actions and gestures to the figure in his composition. The faces and other limbs are harash and arranged and its lacks maturity in the general treatment of figures. But the monkey is painted in quite a naturalistic way. This affect can also be seen in the depiction of a hovering curtain. The folds are rendered such that they indicate European inspiration. This makes obvious the fact Basawan was inclined towards naturalistic representation of both animate and unanimate objects. A close analysis of the paintings reveal that the general atmosphere and treatment are simpler compared to those in the persian classical tradition. Numerous decorative motifs of persian painting have been ignored and very little effort appears to have been made to produce a pictorial affect.

The obvious aims of the *Anwar-i-Suhaili* artist seemed to provide the viewers with paintings of close nature study in as naturlistic manner as possible. The treatment of the sky is frankly in the wester tradition, the tonal and textural quality of the tree trucks, effects of light and shades in the lives are naturalistic and in the western Renaissance and the Indian classical tradition. The painting possess greater depth, specially the second

painting and an ambicious attempt as been made to maintain a continuous 3-D effect.

The animals have been all through been depicted as close to life as possible, by use of modelling and tonal values. Here to the glaze and intensity of persian tradition have been quite subdued by the use of white mixed colours, resulting in a shooting, sobre effect.

Ayar-i-Danish: Twenty years passed since the preparation of the *Anwar-i-Suhaili* of AD 75 and the following of *Ayar-i-Danish.*[34] In the mean time, the atelier has been exposed to various influences and experiment. It is not surprising that the *Ayar-i-Danish* of AD 1596 had taken long strides ahead of the earlier manuscript in the presentation and technique of its illustrations. The painting show workmanship of a very high order. Mature draughtmanship, skillful composition and striking colours. Generally the main episode is highlighted in the foreground and the receeding background recreates the surrounding in which the principal event takes place. For instance we see a farmer tilling land, a women carrying water and further the house of a town or a range of hill. This concept of perspective is clearly due to the European influence which the Mughal artist incorporated into his paintings. In some paintings images of animals and human being from earlier manuscript have been adopted with a certain amount of improvisation.

During Jahangir reign, the number of artist were much more than what was required in the royal atelier, hence the Mughal trained painters of inferrior merit had to work as commercial free lancers without regular patterns.

Tutinamah *(1560-1568 AD)* is a romantic composition centering round the story of a parrot. It was written by *Ziauddin* in the early 14th century and copied in the court in 1560's. It appears that three copies of this manuscript are extant one in the collection of the *Cleveland Museum of Art,* the other in the *Chester Beatty Library* and the third in the *Library of Baron ES*

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34. Scales of Wisdom.

Feuillet de Conches. The Baron's copy contains 103 miniatures. According to *Gray*, the *Chester Beatty* manuscript is also lavishly illustrated and the range of colours appear to be more Indian than Persian. Here, the following three illustrations are reproduced from the Cleveland copy.

i) The lady talking to a parrot.

ii) A fowler extolling the virtues of a parrot by Basawan.

iii) Within a walled enclosure, monkey bites a young man by Daswant.

Compositionally, the first painting frankly reminds us of the painting of the Laurachanda-Charuapanchasika manuscript of the *Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.* It is symmetrical in arrangement; the pavillions with projecting cornices; the placement of decorative pots etc. follow convention. In the second painting also, the artist-*Basawan*, seems to have followed practically the same architectural feature and compositional scheme, though *Basawan's* treatment is much more sophisticated than that of the paintings of Laurchanda-Chaurapanchasika manuscripts. It is quite probable that before joining Akbar's atelier, *Basawan* belonged to the earlier indigenous tradition.

But *Daswant*, the painter of the third illustration appears to have been inspired more by the Persian tradition, since he worked under the direct supervision of the Persian Master *Abdus Samad* from his very early life. The decorative and geometrical elements in his composition are handled very efficiently and depict professional skill. One fact is these paintings which deserve special mention is that the architectural setting is treated in a flat two-dimensional manner, without proper consideration of perspective.

The presentation of landscapes, generally, stick to the Persian tradition. This is very clear in *Daswant's* painting where the sky is hired in gold and trees are treated quite decoratively. But *Basawan* renders the sky and trees somewhat differently; he appears to have adopted the contemporary

European manner in the rendering of the sky and the trees in the background.

As concerning the human figuration, there is a figure of a lady in the centre of the first picture which is conventionally painted quite like the Chaurapanchasika style with the transparent odhni, blouse and skirt. The slight modelling of the face and toiso is in the Hamzah style. The big ear-rings indicate the fashion in vogue in Eastern U.P. As such, it is assumed that the artist was of the same region and was familiar with the indigenous style of painting. *Basawan* in his composition follows a synthetic manner in using the contemporary Hamzah style and synthesising it with the Western light and shade treatment. This specially noticeable in the standing figure holding a cage, in the centre. *Daswant* was however not as proficient as *Basawan,* yet he tried to maintain a dynamic character by imparting actions and gestures to the figures in his composition.

It may, though, be observed that the faces and other limbs are not supple and ill arranged and are deficient in maturity in the general treatment of figures. But the monkey is painted in quite a naturalistic manner. The importance of the naturalistic effect is also witnessed by a hovering curtain shown by *Basawan* in his picture. The folds of the curtain are rendered in such a way that it appears to be inspired by the European Rennaissance paintings. To correspond with the wind bending a tree has been introduced at the right of the artist and his keen study of nature. It is, this, clear the from the very beginning of his artistic career. *Basawan* was biased towards naturalistic representation of objects whether it was animate or inanimate.

MY FINDING AND CRITICAL EVALUATION

The mughal painting school, which we know today was established by Akbar. It was he who led to the amalgamation of the provincial Indian styles of painting with the existing Persian school to result in a unique and echanting painting style-the mughal school.

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Akbar set up the royal atelier recruiting Indian and Persian artists. He personally supervised their work and lavished wealth and titles on his talented artists.

Akbar pioneered manuscript illustration. The most well known being the *Hamza Nama, Akbar Nama, Gulistan of Sadi, Darab Nama, Ain-i-Akbari, Din-i-Ilahi* etc. Several Hindu manuscripts were also illustrated. His interest in Indian literature contributed to the changing of the Mughal school from its Persian beginning into an indigenous tradition.

The atelier was provided with the best of paper and other materials. Colours and pigments were sourced from natural resources and processed. Painting tools were made using animal hair, quills etc. gold and silver were also generously used to impart a very rich look to the manuscripts.

The most outstanding feature of the Mughal artist's achievement has been the expertise with which the technique derived from completely varied sources were fused into a harmoneous whole. The paintings were essentially Persian, synthesized with Indian and European Renaissance styles.

The styles adopted during Akbar's reign were carried on and further developed under Shah Jahan. Presently a few manuscripts of differing periods and of various themes have survived.

We find that unlike the general trend of Indian art, the Mughal miniature does not portray spiritual and emotional matters. This objectivity is the basic aesthetic parameter of the Mughal miniature, which illustrated memoirs, historical monographs, poetry and legends from Persian and Sanskrit literature.

It is interesting to note that though the Mughal miniatures tried to depict reality, nature at its best, true representation in portraiture,

it rarely showed a female figure. Even for those seem their authencity can be seldom verified.

The Mughal court painters excelled in their art. Their delicate miniatures teemed with life, flora and fauna. The brush strokes and details are difficult to see with the naked eye. This can be seen in all the manuscripts illustrated folios.

The *Hamza Nama*, which is a repertoire of the adventures and romantic escapades of Hamza, the prophet's uncle, show a dramatic precedence of the event, broad handling, deep expressive colours and a love of landscape and architecture.

The illustration of the *Tuti Nama* further increases our understanding of the mughal school. Akbar got a new Persian version of the "*Ayar-i-Danish*" to be made so as to be understood by numerous readers. The *Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuria* (c. 1573/74 AD) a detailed history of Timur and his descendants upto the 22nd reignal of Akbar (1578 AD), is calligraphed in a beautiful and bold Nastaliq script with 112 large paintings, which were drawn by 53 artists. The *Gulistan-i-Sadi* (1581 AD) was calligraphed and painted in 1581 AD at Fatehpur Sikri. This manuscript is to be specially mentioned for it's lavish gold decoration and it's portrayal and treatment of flora and fauna.

The Gulistan also shows a couple of figures in portraiture. Portrait painting happens to be one of the greatest heights that Mughal paintings scaled in Indian art history. The mughal emperors had great interest in portraiture and Akbar repeatedly sat for his portraiture as well as of the grandees. As a consequence a unique portrait album was built-up.

Even in historical narratives illustrations, depicting crowded court scenes, one can clearly see the utmost care and attention with

which the individual faces and features were drawn and painted, drawing out both physiological and psychological characteristics which made the individuals drawn identifiable.

Bihzad and Sultan Mohammad were superior Persian painters. Broadly speaking, however, Mughal portraiture differs greatly from Persian. From the very beginning, one notes a clear liking for the 3-D volume in portraiture. The portraits objective is not to depict types but aims to represent certain individuals with careful efforts towards individual forms and features and typical psychological characteristics.

Abu'l Fazl states that Basawan was one of the most skilled portrait artist in Akbar's atelier.

As concerning the source of inspiration for portraiture, one can confidently state that the Indian artists of Akbar's court drew from the Ajanta frescoes.

Thus portraiture was extremely popular. What we now know as the 'Popular Mughal', is the fusion of the court's style of portraiture with the local styles of the courts it later spread to.

Another Hindu manuscript which caught Akbar's fancy was the great epic-*Mahabharata*, termed the '*Razm Namah*' (1582-89 AD). It's folios depict the unmistakable stamp of Indianness. It's obvious that the artist deliberately made efforts to visually impart an Indian feeling. The use of shaded lines and colour tonality give a 3-D effect and the style seems to be a legacy of the Indian classical tradition of illustration.

The *Darab Nama* (c. 1585 AD), a Persian legendary romance was copied and illustrated by master painters at Akbar's court.

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The illustrations of *Akbar Nama* formed the last group of the miniatures painted at Akbar's court. The *Akbar Nama* is a detailed study of Akbar's reign consisting of Akbar's birth, geneaology of Timurids, reign of Babur and Humayun; Akbar's reign from the mid 17th year to the end of the 46th.

The miniatures are full page and a few are double spreads and are mainly creations of joint artists. Several artists cooperated to render this manuscript with enchanting miniatures.

Akbar's great vision, astute judgement of talent and spendthriftness ensured an atelier of unsurpassed talent. His painters individually and jointly, painted, fusing various techniques, producing masterpieces which entice to-date.

Thus, I conclude by stating that under the great monarch Akbar unique paintings which were a class by themselves were produced, different from pre-mughal or contemporary art. It was Akbar under whom a recognizable mughal style was born. Thus, his contribution to Mughal art can never be underestimated.

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Chapter III




European Influence In mughal Miniature During Akbar's Reign

"More than a hundred painters have become famous master of the art, while the number of those who approach perfection or those who are middling is very large. This is especially true of the Hindus, their pictures surpass our conception. Few indeed in the whole world are equal to them"

During the 14th century, the Persian style of painting started influencing the western Indian style, which is obvious from the Persian facial type and hunting scenes seen on the border of some of the Jain Kalpsutra manuscript. The introduction of Persian painting in India was the factor responsible for the development of a new style of painting during the reign of Emperor Akbar.

The artefacts at the exhibition to learn from one another, says Bailey, an assistant professor of Renaissance and Baroque art of clark university in Masachusetts, the Jesuits introduced the Mughal court to a wide spectrum of Renaissance art and culture... (and) they also encountered the Mughals own renaissance—a climate of creativity, experimentation and tolerance artists were fascinated by the perspective and modelling of the European prints and paintings brought by the Jesuits. They quickly mastered the renaissance style and eventually adapted western conventions to mainstream Mughal art, says Bailey. *"The result, especially under Jahangir, was an extremely refined naturalism, an enthusiasm for psychological portraiture and a taste for the dramatic gesture".*[1]

It is estimated that 25 percent of the artists—most of whom were Hindu— in the Mughal emperor's ateliers did works with christian themes. Christianity of course, was scarcely as alien to India as the European renaissance: it had flourished in Kerala since at least AD 5.2.

However, the emperor and their painters were interested in more than art lessons from the Jesuits. The paintings also reflect the emperor's fascination with world religions, he says. *"The most famous result of their spiritual leanings were the imperial interfaith debates (1570-1608) held at the royal palaces on Thursday nights, in which the Jesuits debated with Shia, Sunni and Brahmin theologists".*[2]

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1. The Sunday Times.
2. Ibid.

"The Mughal cross cultural paintings, says Bailey, have often been relegated to the footnotes of art history texts, because people do not know what to do with hybrid art".[3] However, the Harvard educated scholar was motivated to write his Ph.D. thesis on the works because they show how art was central to the formulation of imperial mughal propaganda as the emperors sought to assign Indian and Islamic meaning to the images and thus convert them into manifestations of their divine right to rule.

Both Jesus and Mary play an important role in the Koran and Islamic literature. In Islamic tradition Jesus will descend on the days of Judgement and rule as the sovereign in Jerusalem. Bailey suggests that this particular attribute...was of prime importance to the ideology of the Mughal emperors who promoted themselves as *"mersiahs"*.[4]

Several paintings have Jesus and Mary as a pair, with Jesus on the left and Mary on the right. *"The prominence of this couple—directly over imperial thrones, on the emperor's Jewellery and even on his royal seal—strongly implied a direct reference to the monarchy or to the actual person of the emperor, says Bailey. These works were neither exotic coprices or capitulations*[5] *to western art... They demonstrate how India has always been able to tolerate and absorb other cultures".*

The 11th century marked the birth of manuscript illustration in India with the illumination of the palm-leaf Jain and Buddhist manuscripts. In the later part of the 14th century paper began to be used.

In around 1560, Akbar set up his atelier and recruited painters from all the local provinces who worked under *Mir Saiyyid Ali* and *Abdus Samad*, the Persian masters. This led to the development of the *"Mughal School"*,[6] which was the synthesis of the Safavid Persian style and provincial Indian styles. The mughal painting was secular and autocratic in character. It is marked by fine draughtmanship and a simple naturalism based on close

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3. Blend of two different styles/traditions.
4. Epic poem.
5. Statement of main parts of the subject.
6. A mix of Persian and Indian Styles.

observation of nature. *"Illustrations of the Hamza Nama[7] showing the exploits of Amir Hamza, uncle of Prophet Mohammad represent an ambitions project which was undertaken and completed during the early period of Akbar's rule".*

Akbar's painters embibed several western painting characteristics from the European Rennaissance paintings. Miniature copies of sacred christian pictures which began under Akbar's kingship became more popular under Jahangir. These can be seen in numerous collection of Indian paintings, a noteworthy specimen, now in the British Museum is the *"scoffing of christ"*, is a superbly executed copy of an European original.

By the end of the sixteenth century numerous paintings of European religious themes and of the secular order were painted by the court atelier. In a copy of the *Shah Nama* illustrated by Akbar's artists is a picture of *"Humayun watching a number of women dancing"*. A miniature also depicts a frieze in the Fatehpur Sikri Palace with a series of panels depicting European pictures of supposedly *Portuguese*[8] origin. This was followed by arrival of Portuguese and Indian picture who did not travel beyond Goa.

In 1596, a painter of a Jesuit Mission presented himself at Akbar's court and gifted a copy of a picture of the Virgin Mary which Akbar promptly had copied. In his zeal for pictures of all kinds, Akbar encouraged European art in all his dominions and even patronized its painters. This, however, did not lead to much difference in the Mughal style of painting. The handiwork of the painters was more assimilative of the Hindu artists who had frozen some characteristics of European art and confidently placed them in their pictures.

While Akbar showed a decided proclivity for European pictures, his son was even more interested and when he became the Emperor, appears to have developed into a whole-hearted admirer of all forms of "occidental art".[9]

Portraiture was practiced in post-christian Hellinistic Stacco work of India and Central Asia. However, we do not have enough proof to denote that such practices were known and available to the Mughal artists. They were

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7. Epic tales in Persian.
8. Natives of Portugal.
9. Percy Brown, Indian painting under the Mughal AD 1550 to AD 1750, Oxford, at the Cleveland Press, 1924.

influenced by Flemish and perhaps Dutch art prints of which were freely sold in South-East Asian markets and were available in Delhi and Agra markets also. Historical facts of gifts of paintings to the Mughal monarchs can also be seen on records and are well known. That Rembrandt used to copy modes and manner, may be a bit unsuccessfully, of Mughal court painters, especially potraiture is also widely known.

Another fact, which we have been were acquainted with for the past 50 years but not referred to often is the long series of typical, courtly Mughal paintings framed in Baroque frames on walls and ceilings of two large rooms of the *"Schonbran Palace"*, near Vienna.

Inspite of close contact with the west European Rennaissance art and despite their acclimiatization in India, from Akbar onwards, the Mughal court and aristocracy remained truely Indian till its very end. The consequence of this is that Mughal miniatures can't be scaled by similar parameters as those used for the elevation of European pictorial art.

"Basawan and Daswanth, won fame and glory, and were highly skilled in the representation of perspective, in drawing, and in the use of colour and portrait he contested with his unfortunate reval for the first place in the time of Akbar. Both artists opened the way for a progressive transformation of Mughal art into a purely Indian art".[10]

It was only during a later period, that copies and good quality prints of European art reached India. European elements could be seen specially in landscapes of the Mughal miniatures and reading perspectives by and different visual techniques, especially Italian techniques, which resulted in a stark contrast with the vertically rendered perspectives of the Gujarat school.

In the "Indo-Persian" phase of miniature painting, landscapes details were taken from Chinese and Central Asian paintings.

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10. D. Bersett, Painting of India, Asst. Lueosr and Curata of Oriental Antiquities of the British Museum.

In 1580, the mission led by the Neopolitan Jesuit Rodolpho Acquaviva gifted Akbar a copy of the Royal Polygot Bible of king Philip II of Spain and a few other art items too. The illumination of the Bible and its fine frontispieces were greatly appreciated in the court. Numerous Indian painters became experts in the precise appraisal of the technical level and quality of European works. The artists favoured an Indian-European specially Italian synthesis. This appreciation was reciprocated by western painters like *Rembrandt, Sir Joshua Reynolds, William Schellinks* who were impressed and influenced by the Mughal miniatures.

The Mughal style of painting was not only influenced by the western engravings and illumination but they also served as models for preparing copies for the royal albums by the Imperial atelier.

The Mughal painting was termed as *"Indo-Persian"*[11] by early scholars who considered Mughal paintings as colonial offshoots of the 15th and 16th century Persian paintings.

They are quite incorrect since the Mughal empire was never a Persian colony nor did the Mughal court painting depend solely on Persian sources. On the contrary, the Mughal emperors made free and independent choices conditioned by their ethnic and cultural origins affliations and contacts.

Percy Brown has authored a very interesting book on a unique phase of Indian painting. Despite sumptuously printed book on Mughal schools, they have been largely neglected by the British connoisseurs and public.

In 1977, Sir Joshua Reynolds himself recorded his appreciation for the beauties of Mughal painting, but his tribute was a solitary one.

Prior to Akbar, there existed a vital and dynamic school of painting, both in book illustrations and portfolio pictures and there existed more than one guild or shreni of the practitioners whom Akbar brought together and consolidated. *"The British connoisseur wholly misses the significance of this tribute, and fails to draw the obvious and legitimate conclusion as to the state*

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11. A blend of Persian and Indian Styles.

and temper of the surviving indigenous school on which Akbar based his foundation".[12]

The Mughal school's development was a landmark in the history of Indian painting. In the Hamza painting, we can actually see Mughal paintings in the making. Their real importance is available from an analysis of their internal evidence, in numerous details have been quite overshadowed by the belief that they were all works of imported Kalmuch painters.

The Mughal style was further influenced by the European painting which made its way to the Mughal court in about 1580 and adopted some of the western techniques like shading and perspective.

Another feature of European art which interested the Mughals was its christian identity, knowledge of christianity was embedded in the Mughal myth and symbolism long before, the arrival of European and models. The great significance attached to the Mughal style of painting was the exposure of Akbar's atelier with European art and art-forms, Hindu painters learnt 3-D landscape and new colour schemes unknown to Persian painters. Some of the miniatures depicting episodes from Persian poems show Portuguese figures and even *Christian* saints.

Very few of Akbar's painters show an individual style. Amongst the most famous in *Basawan*, whose style was often independent from Persian conventions and colour schemes. His colour palette and dileneation etc. exhibited the European influence.

Akbar was the first monarch to display interest in the handiwork of the European craftsmen. He even appears to have retained a Portuguese official in his service to gather information about them. The scattered knowledge that Akbar had crystallized into concrete information through appointment of an agent sent to Goa to investigate.

The agent, *Haji-Habibullah* performed his job well. But the results of his efforts have been meagrely recorded. One article which received special

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12. Rupam, All illustrated quarterly journal of Oriental Art, 1921, Vol. 5.

appreciation was a church organ. A court artist, Madho Khanazad, later introduced this instrument in a painting of *'a musician charming a large concourse of wild beasts who lie helplessly around him'.*

Akbar's desires for productions of the west increased and seemed he began to devise other methods of securing what he coveted. This included extending hospitality for long periods to Jesuit missionaries. In one of the suites of the *"House of Miriam"*[13] in Akbar's. Fatehpur Sikri, one can see the facted remains of a massive mural the subject of which is supposed to be *"the announcement"*. The missionaries came prepared with numerous painting of saints and religious topics, which seem to have been greatly appreciated. The result of the study of these is evident in a number of miniatures.

As per Mughal tradition, numerous painters were commissioned a single manuscript. Copying them the courtiers and provincial officials also employed artists well versed in the Mughal technique of painting. They could, however afford only artists of inferior merit. Their work of these painters is known as the *"Popular Mughal"*[14].

Illiminated historical manuscripts are very many, especially of Akbar's period. The most outstanding in Islamic art is the Akbar Nama containing 17 folios which are extremely compelling though non-uniform in quality. *Basawan*, however has surpassed all painters and ever himself in his renderings.

The works of several German and Finnish engravers was known to them *Durer, H.S. Beham, Haerten Van Heemskerck, Sadeler, Wieircx and Pieter Vander Heyden* are represented by original or superb copies in the Mughal imperial albums. These copies were made by *Kesu, Kesava Das, Nadira Banu, Abu'l Hasan* and others. All copies, except the one depicting the figure of St. John, which is only slighting tinted, are fully coloured as per the western colour schemes thus confirming that the artists had free access to the European paintings or to the advice of Europeans.

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13. Bible, the sister of Moses and Aaron.
14. Provincial Mughal Painting.

Akbar's interest in other western art is also undeniable. In 1581, he was fascinated by a European organ which can be seen in one of the margin pictures of Jahangir's albums leaves. In 1582, he hung what we believe to be tapestries in his palace. In the same year the Mughal painters made copies of the lord and the virgin Mary and in 1602 copied a replica of the *'Madonna del Topolo'.*

In twenty years from 1595 to 1615, one observes numerous instances of a thorough assimilation of the western pictorial science.

During Akbar's reign, *Daswanth* was amongst the nine Hindu painters who rendered oblong miniature to this manuscript aligned with the spine of the book. Similar to early, Deccani and pre-Mughal paintings.

Basawan, was another Hindu of unknown origin who became a leading light of the atelier and was next to *Daswanth* in this achievement in the Jaipur *'Razm Nama'*.[15] *Daswanth* was *Abdus Samad's* pupil and *Basawan's* competitor. Though these painters adopted certain European techniques and elements of European art, the character and basic presentation of three drawing skills were truly Indian.

A few painters whose names are written below the miniature of the *Darab Nama* belonged to Lahore, the imperial seat after the abandonment of Fatehpur Sikri in 1585. The drawing is vigorous and strong, sometimes even coarse and colours and even crude, quite different from the soft tones of the Safavi school-all except one leaf which carries the unexpected name of *Abdus Samad*. The more forward looking painters who also participated are *Miskin, Nanha, Bhurah, Sarwan* and *Kanha* also depict Deccani costumes, thus revealing a wider horizon. These are a minority of the illustration, these artists are represented by only one picture apiece. *Miskin* and *Basawan* were to become two of the leading painters in the last year of Akbar's reign and *Kanha* and *Sarwan* also flourished till the end of that period.[16]

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15. Epic tales in Persian.
16. Rupam, An illustrated quarterly journal of oriental art chiefly India, Vol. 5. The Indian Society of Oriental Art.

The *Darab Nama* is thus most significant for its promise for the future and it's evidence of the vigour of the school at this time. The bulk of the miniatures are dominated by the Harsh reds and greens which seem to characterise the palette of Lahore.

The imitation of European pictures and techniques began during Akbar's reign (after 1582) and carried on till the late seventeenth century. Any influence observed in the Mughal painting must be due to the first mission. Internal proof indicates that engaving and illustrated manuscript were available in the atelier. Their elements influenced the artistic expression of the country.

The direct contact due to the Jesuit priests led to the introduction of European art in the Mughal court. It's said that the fathers also presented a copy of the Bible to Akbar who received it with great reverence and also commanded his artists to copy pictures of christ and the virgin which the fathers had with them and directed a gala reliquory to be made. Records of such painting prove that the adaptations from European paintings did not influence the artists to any visible extent, they retained their Indian traditions, and worked under instructions to satisfy their patron's fancy than learn anything new.

Both Deccani and Mughal artists invited European prints but their interests greatly varied and allow us to distinguish between these two contemporary Islamic traditions, working with Indian artists. We note that the Mughal artist used cloth to enhance the bright and mass of the bodies by highlighting and shading its thesis and was close to the identified European source. Conversely, the Deccan artists renders a rich pattern of drapery folds and shading was used not to increase the sense of physical existence, but to intensify.

Mr. Percy Brown excuses the British neglect of the Mughal school by saying that it was on occasional and that now its chance of scaling a fairly high peak in the sphere of pictorial art seems assured. Few agree with his

remarks. Before Mr. Havell noted his admiration, the Mughal miniatures were neglected on the assumption that they were a decadent branch of Persian painting.

"To, Dr. Coomaraswamy, the students of this school are indebted in numerous respects, but Dr. Brown must be credited for attempting a pioneering monograph on the subject with sufficient materials. His selection from various collections for the very first lead to neu information being documented. This included the hitherto unknown coloured plates from the Rampur State Library".[17] The most valuable of these materials is a page in Mongolian style from the history of the Mongols. Apart from the painting being of an unsurpassable quality, its an important document for the history and development of Persian painting. But, despite its numerous obligations to the Central Asian Schools, especially the Timurid, the Mughal school had its own indigenous quality.

Mr. Brown has been completely unsuccessful in drawing the legitimate conclusions as to the state and temper of the surviving indigenous school on which Akbar founded the Mughal school. Mr. Brown further confuses the issue by his somewhat confusing remark: *"undoubtedly, the natural genius of these Indian painters, the result of centuries of experience only required Akbar's patronage and the Persian's guidance to bring it again to a high state of efficiency".*[18] Another factor ignored by Mr. Brown is that the indigenous picture tradition in its Rajput existed and flourished simultaneously with the Mughal tradition of painting.

Thus we can conclude the discussion on the foundation of the Mughal school by Abu'l Fazl's remarks: *"when the Moghul began to turn their attention to the revival of painting in India, there still survived a strong living tradition among the people of the country on which the movement they had in contemplation might be most surely founded".*

Abu'l Fazl proudly claimed that the masterpieces produced at the Imperial atelier were comparable to the works of the master painters of Persia (such

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17. Rupam, An illustrated quarterly journal of oriental art chiefly India. Vol. 5. The Indian Society of Oriental Art.
18. Ibid.

as Bihzad), and of Europe. He specifically observed that the miniatures now exhibited greater realism and commended the painters' command of fine detail, clarity of line, firmness of hand, freshness.

Mughal miniature painting also gained recognition outside India among contemporary European painters. It most celebrated European admirer was undoubtedly *Rembrandt* (1606-69). He not only had Mughal miniatures in his collection, but also tried his hand at working in the Mughal style.

Akbar's history manuscripts were the great exhibitionist texts of the reign. In the short period of twenty year from 1555, when *Bairam Khan* had reconquered Delhi for Humayun to 1575, when Akbar ruled over a vast territory the Mughals had moved from failure to success and from insecurity to relative stability.

Akbar thus commissioned an illustrated account of his ancestor Timur about 1584. In order to stress the greatness of Mughal victory, imperial artist recreated in vishal terms the sensations of explosions, assaults and marches with an immediacy previously unknown. The style employed for the fabulous tales of the *Hamza Nama* were smoothly altered as these men experimented with ever more sophisticated naturalistic devices. The highly-trained miniatures, some of whom travelled as observers of Akbar's battles, organized scenes so that new panoramic views of cities, impenetrable hill fortresses, and tortuous rivers became possible.

The Beatty collection includes a battle scene from a *Babur Nama*, a scene of Akbar's childhood taken from the first great copy of the biographical *Akbar Nama*, nearly the last of the emperor's extensive histories which describes his Mongol ancestors.

Several of the last miniatures reflect Akbar's curiosity about remote European cultures. The emperor's most extensive contacts with Europeans were those with portuguese christians, including the Jesuit missionaries invited to his court. Akbar first met a portuguese delegation from Goa in 1573 when he was besieging the western port city of Surat.

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European prints and probably paintings came from other sources also. Their influence is discernible in miniatures, such as ones from the Cleveland *Tuti Nama* completed before Akbar's introduction to the portuguese in 1573, and it therefore appears that from the early years of the reign prints were available as a result of sea trade. The predominance of religious subjects in the copies and paraphrases made by Akbari artists indicates, however, that the Jesuits were the major contacts in the letter part of the period. Among the miniatures belonging to the librarys are two that typical the chief kinds of imitation found at the Mughal court. *'Joseph Telling His Dream'*, is a close copy of a European print that contrasts with belonged to Prince Salim.

Akbar had rejected Persian culture in order to develop a strong indigenous style. Writing of the imperial atelier, *Abu'l Fazl* repudiates the idea ways in which native artists had come to excel. Akbar had deliberately forged a style with which Indian could identify and take pride in. The radically different views of life held by the emperor and his heir Salim resulted in quarrels and estrangement in Akbar's last year.

MY FINDING AND CRITICAL EVALUATION

The illustration of Buddhist and Jain manuscripts in 11th century AD marked the birth of miniature painting in India.

During the 14th century the Persian style of painting influenced the western India style but it was the 16th century that the Mughal school was born under Emperor Akbar.

Akbar and his painters were introduced to European Rennaissance painting through the Jesuit priests who presented pictures and books of religious art. Akbar was deeply interested in European art and ordered his painters to make copies of them. Several excellent copies of pictures like "thè scoffing of christ", *"virgin Mary and Child"* etc can be seen.

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Even the painting depicting various parts of the palace at Fatehpur Sikri show friezes on the walls which consisted of series of panels depicting European pictures of supposedly Portuguese origins. Several Portuguese and European artists stayed in Goa and painted religious art in the several churches built by the Portuguese. In his zeal for pictures of all kinds, Akbar encouraged European art in all its dominions and even patronized it's painters, but by and large, the paintings of Akbar's time depict only in a modified degree, the western influence.

Portraiture was known and practiced in post-christian Hellenistic Stucco work of India and Central Asia, clearly in imitation of graeco-Roman portraiture and may be Ajanta frescoes. The European Renaissance portraitures and prints were freely sold in the South-Asian markets and made their way to the Mughal court. The Mughal painting was vital and receptive enough to absorb a number of elements of contemporary west European Rennaissance painting. But the result is that the activity of the Mughal miniatures cannot be measured by the same parameters as those used for the elevation of European pictorial art.

Basawan and Daswanth were brilliant perspectivists who paved the way for the transformation of Mughal art into a purely Indian one though it was only later that copies and good quality prints reached India, however, the Italian techniques were specially adopted for landscapes and perspectives. These techniques were superimposed with other rendering techniques taken from Chinese and Central Asian painting.

The influence of European and Mughal art was mutual. Rennaissance painters like Rembrandt and Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dutch master-William Schellenks were greatly impressed by the Indian miniatures and Rembrandt specially even imitated the Mughal miniatures brush-strokes but in a different medium-oil

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In the context of the Mughal schools. practically cartloads of pictures have rested in the British Archives for nearly half a century before it could be stated that they evoked any interest in English connoisseurship.

Apart from the perspectives and shading techniques, another characteristic which interested the Mughals was its *"christian identity"*. The knowledge of christianity was embedded in the Mughal myth and symbolism since a very long time. Some of the miniatures depicting episodes from Persian poems show Portuguese figures and even christian saints.

Akbar was the first monarch to be interested in European art and craftsmanship. He obtained concrete knowledge about the christian religious paintings by sending agents to do so and even by retaining Portuguese officers in his service. He sent his agent on one such mission to Goa. Among other recording, one article which recevied special appreciation was a "church again" which was later introduced in a painting by a court artist, Madho Khanazad.

Akbar's desires for productions of the west increased and soon he began to devices new methods of scouring what he coveted. This included inviting Jesuit priests, and offering them long term hospitality and establishing contact with the merchant adventures from the west. They in turn, gifted him illuminated copies of the Bible, illustrations and engravings.

The work of numerous German and Finnish engravers were known to the Mughal court painters. Durer, H.S. Beham, Maerten Van Heemskeeck and Sadeler, Wiericx and Preter vander Heyder are represented by original or superb copies in the Mughal albums. Copies by Kesu and Kesava Das are known. Copies of other European prints by Nadira Banu, Abu'l Hasan are also known.

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The western colour schemes of a majority of them indicate that the artists had free access to European paintings or to the advance of Europeans.

The ateliers master painters, Daswanth and Basawan exhibit excellent understanding of the western techniques. This is evident from the miniatures of the Jaipur 'Razm Nama', the Anwar-i-Suhaili. The other forward looking others who participated in painting the Darabnama are Miskin, Nanha, Bhurah Sarwan, Kanha along with the .unexpected name of Abdus Samad. In this however, the harsh pallette of Lahore was mainly used.

Thus, during Akbar's reign (after 1582) began the assimilation of European pictures and figures. Landscapes and motifs were now shown as salient features of the composition. This tradition contained till the late seventeenth century internal proof indicates that two types of European pictorial art was available to the Mughal atelier - engravings and illustrated manuscripts. We observe here that the characteristics of European art impressed upon the artistic expression of the country.

The direct contact between India and England commenced in the later part of the 16th century. Pictures and religious manuscript, included a copy of the Bible was presented to the Emperor who promptly got them painted. However, this did not influence the Mughal artists to a great extent, since very few paintings, rendered while European art copies were made, depict European influence during the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir.

The European prints were copied by both Deccani and Mughal artists but their Islamic traditions were quite contrary. The European techniques were used differently by both the schools. The mughals used highlighting and shading to mark the forms to exist whereas the Deccanis did it to intensify the portrait or picture painted.

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Mr. Percy Brown has stated that since Sir Joshua Reynolds had recorded his admiration for a few Mughal miniatures in the British Miniature albums, with only occasional periods of neglect. Few, however agree with this statement.

Prior to Mr. Havell recording his admiration the Mughal miniatures were neglected on the assumption that they were a decadent branch of Persian painting and very not given due attention by the British.

Mr. Brown must however be credited for his attempt to write a monograph on the subject, armed with sufficient materials. His choice from the various collections led to, for the very first time, new information being documented, which included the laudable discovering of material, till now unknown, from the Rampur State Library. Inspite of its numerous obligations to the Central Asian Schools, the Mughal school had its own indigenous qualities.

Mr. Brown has completely failed to draw the obvious and legitimate conclusion as to the state and temper of the surviving indigenous school on which Akbar had based his foundation. He also missed another view that simultaneous with the Mughal school, the indigenous Rajput school flourished which was completely based on the folk psychology and culture of the Hindu population.

We thus conclude that the later Mughal paintings were not only an enchanting synthesis of the Persian and provincial Indian styles, but also had embibed the real life depiction of the western Rennaissance styles. The amalgamation of these styles, which began under Akbar's able guidance, culminated in the Mughal school which we know today.

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Chapter IV




Persian Elements
In
Mughal miniature
During
Akbar's Reign

"The result, especially under Jahangir, was an extremely refined naturalism, an enthusiasm for psychological portraiture and a taste for the dramatic gesture"

Persian art reflects a 5,000 year old cultural tradition shaped by the diverse cultures that have flourished on the vast Iranian plateau occupied by modern Iran and Afghanistan. The history of Persian art can be divided into two distinct eras whose demarcation is the mid-7th century's AD. When invading Arab armies brought about the conversion of the Persian people to Islam, whereas during the pre-Islamic centuries artistic expression was at the service of the kings and the worship of fire was prominent, during the Islamic period the arts served Allah, and religious structures and artifacts were the focal points of artistic interest.

Despite the sharp break between the ancient and Islamic eras, Persian art throughout centuries displays an underlying unity. Subject to many foreign invasions the Persian were always ready to absorb artistic influences from abroad and to re-express them with new meanings. Persian design almost invariably has stressed decorative forms rather than the human figure. These designs are both geometrical and floral, and very similar motifs appear in works produced hundreds of year apart. This continuity of forms—executed in such media as stone plaster, bricks tiles, pottery, and textiles—is the most distinctive feature of Persian art.

This title presumes the existence of more than a single Indian style of painting, during Akbar's reign, adopted by artists of Indian origin, with which one or more styles of contemporary Persia were synthesised. Different styles of painting were prevalent in India and Persia of the 15th and 16th centuries.

But a close study of the paintings that are dated or datable during the earlier part of the reign of Akbar before 1585 would make it clear that there were numerous other forms and styles of painting and many other cultural forces that were active at Akbar's court. The painting, even of the

formative period of what we call *'Mughal painting'*, present a wider horizon and take the context of Akbari painting. This thesis proposes, thus, to new Mughal paintings during Akbar's reign from a wider context.

Mughal painting as a subject of Indian art history and of the history of Islamic art, has often been discussed and documented by competent scholars and knowledgeable connoissuers for the last 50 years or more. The theme is, therefore, quite familiar to all pupils of Indian art and culture. It is a well-known fact that this was a form and style of painting which was very different from whatever the art of paintings had preceded a succeeded it in India. This was why *Coomaraswamy* in his *"History of Indian and Indonesian Art"* left Mughal painting out of his analysis. Indeed he thought that it was not a part of the Indian art.

It is also quite well-known that Mughal painting is a court art which is supposed to have originated from the Timurid and Safavid styles of Persia, which were introduced by Humayun through the two Persian masters in his atelier *Mir Saiyyid Ali* and *Abdus Samad*. All along the approximately 150 years of the Mughal school's history, it received its inspiration and sustenance from Persian which is the reason why the form and style were once known as *'Indo-Persian'*.[1] This nomenclature is no longer in use; but, the implication still presists, though it is an accepted fact that despite its Persian origin and continued Persian inspiration, the school achieve an integrity and identity unique to it.

The reign of *Babur* (1526-1530) and *Humayun* (1530-1540) were too turbulent to play a vital role in the history of painting. Humayun however, during his exile, visited the court of *Shah Tahmasp* and brought back two Persian artists, *Mir Saiyyid Ali* and *Abdus Samad*, when he returned to Delhi. These artists, and other who came later from Persia, trained the Indian artists who produced the greatest Mughal miniatures.

Under Akbar the great (1556-1605), the imperial court was a haven for both statesmen and connoisseurs. Akbar extended the boundaries of the

1. A Blend of Indian and Persian Style.

kingdom then reorganized it. Complete toleration was accorded to all sects and public religious discussions were fostered. This electicism had far reaching effects. Persian was Akbar's language, but he had Rajput princesses in his harem. The Hindu epic, the *Mahabharata*, was translated into Persian and native artists of the royal atelier who prepared the histories of the reign of the emperor and his *grandfather*.

The art flourished under Akbar did not entirely stem from painters such as *Mir Saiyyid Ali* and *Khwaja Abdus Samad*. Akbar created a new synthesis of art with the combination of Indian chinese's European art. *Hamza painting* belonged to tradition of tent hanging. It was mainly the work of *Mir Sayyid Ali* and *Khawaja Abdus Samad*, assisted by several other artists.

That the element of individuality was not entirely wanting in the artists, is evidenced by examining some of the illustrations by *Dhanraj, Paras, Shankar, Farrukh Beg* etc. The former shows a noticeable skill in the horizontally curved lines which are used with great clarity and boldness for shading the mounds and tree trunks. He displays an inclination for the blue and green colours which are, skillfully manipulated to achieve particular atmosphere. *Paras* seems to specialise in the use of straight lines. These are laid both horizontally and vertically for bringing out the shaded portions of background and costume folds. War scenes and congregational setting in light colours seem to be the speciality.

Shanker is a skilled designed artist, his paintings stand out for decoration and compactness.

The illustrations done by *Farrukh Beg*, an artist of qalmuck origin; have entirely Persian school effect in its feelings and atmosphere. The drawings of human and animal figures, designs displayed on costumes, buildings and ensighs etc. the depiction of hills and trees all associates the Persian style.

"Considering that they were collected before Persian miniature paintings were appreciated or even much noticed this group of manuscript provides an

excellent representation of the various style of the "Timurid and Safavid periods".[2]

The earlier west Indian manuscripts illustrations have a relatively restricted palette, with yellow, vermillion, brick-red and crimson being the more prevalent colours. But, in the paintings of 15th and early 16th centuries one cannot fail to note the very lavish use of gold and lapis lazuli blue which appears to indicate a direct impact of contemporary Persian painting.

The manuscript of the *Diwan-i-Amir Khusraw*,[3] a Persian text of Indian origin, now in the Freer gallery of Art, Washington, prepared, perhaps in the second half of the 15th century in the Muslim court of Gujarat, seems to have been directly influenced by the Persian manuscript of the *Maqammat-i-Hariri*, of Bibliothique Nationale, Paris. The style of the illustrations seems to be largely uninfluenced by the then Indian popular style of the Jain manuscript.

Another profusely illustrated manuscript entitled *Dastan-i-Amir Hamza*[4] depicting the romantic adventures of Hamza, the prophet Muhammad's uncle, now preserved in the collection of Sitzing Presussicher Kueturbesitz, Tubingen, West Germany, is also attributed to the late 15th century and as having been painted in North India stylistically, it's quite crude and resembles the style of the *Sikandar-nawab*. Male figures may be particularly observed for their Persian origin.

The manuscript of the *Gulistan-i-Sa'di*[5] is a Persian poem, now in the collection of the National Museum, New Delhi. It is generally attributed to the illustrator, *Haji Mahmood*, a Persian refugee who arrived at the court of Mandu when *Shaibain Khan Uzbek* captured Herat in 1507.

All the illuminations in this manuscript are rendered in the Persian decorative style. In painting figures and apparel, the artist seems to have adopted a naturalistic approach but the figures are static and expressionless. The colours used are mostly analogous in character. The sky is either gold a

2. 15-16 Century Period of Iran and Persian History.
3. Collection of Work of Amir Khusraw Poetical.
4. Epic Stories in Persian.
5. Poetic Collection of Skeikh Sadi's.

blue. The clouds are depicted as in the Chinese style. The hillocks are shown in purple, green and blue in the usual Persian convention. In the interior scenes, the designs are of a variety of patterns, mostly geometrical. Indeed there is hardly any element in the painting which can be considered Indian either in form or spirit.

The chronology of a group of manuscript paintings usually referred to as the *'Chaurapan-Chasika'*[6] series has been, the topic of controversy among a group of art historians. One school of scholars associates these paintings with the art of Rajasthan before the establishment of the Mughal school. The other school is of the opinion that Rajsthani miniature school neither existed prior to the advent of the Mughals nor was it contemporary with the early Mughal school of painting.

The important contribution to our knowledge has been made in regard to the history of the origin of Mughal painting itself. Significantly, it relates to the role played by Humayun in this context and young Akbar's role in it.

For a long time, it has been known that Babur and Humayun were keenly interested in the art of painting. Babur, like his ancestors was a great connoisseur of poetry, painting and philosophy. He could critically appreciate them. In his memoirs the *Tuzuk-i-Baburi,*[7] he has commented on Bihzad's painting, pointing out certain defects with remarks that *"there is no equal to Bihzad in portrait painting, but he is an expert in the execution of bearded figures only. If he has to portray the figure without beard, he always elongated the chin"*.[8] With great appreciation Babur also mentioned the name of *Shah Muzzaffar,* the painter, who excelled in the representation of hair style with accuracy and delicate rendering.

'Abdus-Samad Shirin Qalam', who is equally excellent in his contemporaries. He too has painted a polo ground. *"There are two poles on either sides and riders are shown playing on the ground, who are followed by attendant carrying polo-sticks. On a rice grain he has painted a big talar in which two figures are*

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6. Chaurpanchasika, Probably UP-Delhi, c. AD 1525-1570, N.C. Mehtra collection: Culture Centre, Ahemdabad.
7. Memoirs of Babur.
8. Cf. Mujib M. Mughal Fan-i-Musavviri-Tarikh Ki Roshni Men, Ajka, Indian Painting Number, August 1960 and L. Wilkinson, J.V.S. and Gray B., Persian Miniature Painting, London, 1933.

represented setting up a stove beside a pond. One of them is preparing chicken cutlets".

"A specimen of Mir Saiyyid Ali's painting, a work of Abdus Samad, who has painted Navroz,[9] one painting by Maulana Darvesh Muhammad, and also another painting by Maulana Yusef are being sent herewith. In future, God willing some more works of these artists will be sent to you".

Firstly, its a well-known fact that Indian painting's contact with Persian has a long history, at any rate from the 10th and 11th centuries AD. Such contacts have left underable influence on the frescoes of some of the Jain caves at Ellora belonging to those two centuries, if not a century earlier, on the west Indian manuscript illustrations of particularly the 14th, 15th and early 16th centuries, and on a number of book illustrations excited in the Delhi and regional courts of the 15th and early 16th centuries. More Chandra and Khandawala have also deduced sound reasons to assume that illustrated manuscripts of *Mongol,*[10] Turkman and Timurid origins were imported to the courts of these Sultan's periodically.

If Persian painting is the only source of the origin being claimed, which should be, if not the whole that atleast a major part of the Mughal school, then how is it that never before Akbar came to India's throne, did a school of painting like that of the Mughal court, or even a similar school, come to being. Whatever Indian styles and forms that are generally referred to in this connection and which are assumed to have contributed towards the synthesis, namely, the west Indian manuscript, the local styles of courts of Delhi, Mandu and Jaunpur, were available and well-known to the Sultanate court as well.

The Mughal painting even in its formative period, completely different from the paintings can be dated in the 15th and early 16th centuries. The evident assumption is that there must have been elements of other forms and styles of Indian painting which aided the making of what Mughal painting came to be during Akbar's reigns. One of the objectives of this

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9. New Year's day.
10. Corrupt from of 'Mughal'.

thesis, therefore is to find out the other Indian styles and forms that west Indian and Sultanate which made Mughal painting so very, unique from contemporary Persian painting-different in form, style, spirit and atmosphere.

Secondly the *Tazkir-i-Humayun Va Akbar* by *Biyazid Biyat* gives rise to a significant point of the form and styles of painting practised by the five Persian artists, who were imported by Humayun from Persia and who joined him at Kabul.

A careful scrutinization of the quotation would exhibit, quite convincingly, that these artists, including *Mir Saiyyid Ali* and *Abdus Samad* were true to the Persian tradition-miniaturist in the vain. The themes chosen and the technique followed are certainly of the miniature. Apart from this, it is general knowledge that Persian painting was basically a miniaturists art.

Humayun had gathered a group of artists, who may have been the contributors to the laying of the foundation of a small royal studio. It appears that after the recovery of his lost empire and re-establishment at Delhi he did not waste time in organizing a *Tasvir-Khana*[11] as an adjunct of the royal library. But, we have no proof at our disposal to show that he recruited local talent or to prove that he had any intention of organizing a royal atelier on so large a scale so as to be able to undertake a vast project like that of the *Dastan-i-Amir Hamzah.* All that the two painting of the *Gulistan Album* of the Gulistan Library, both by *Abdus Samad,* proof that one of the two was rendered in 1551 AD when the artist had not yet arrived at the Kabul court and the other shows Akbar taking lessons from *Abdus Samad,* may be at Kabul. It is to be noted that both paintings are typically Persian in form and style. There is no trace in these paintings of what Mughal painting eventually came to be, even during the early years of Akbar's rule.

Besides, whatever other proofs we have in the above written facts, does not signify that Humayun ever aimed at organizing any activity of the sort

11. Arti Studio.

that Akbar did for the production of the works such as the *Dastan-i-Amir Hamza*, the *Tutinama*, the *Anwar Suhaili* etc. All that Humayun's *Tasvir-Khana* seems to prove is that an art studio which was like what other medieval emperors, kings and nobles maintained as part of their libraries. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to discuss the origin of the Mughal paintings' history, but more so formally and stylistically.

Abul Fazl mentions in the *Ain-i-Akbari* that *"the number of masterpieces of painting increased with the encouragement given to the art. Persian, books, both prose and poetry were ornamented with pictures and a very large number of paintings were thus collected. The story of the Hamza was represented in 12 volumes and eleven painters made the most astonishing illustrations for no fewer than 1,400 passages of the story".*[12]

Illustration to the *"Dastan-i-Amir Hamza", "Fairies call on Hamza to kill the Dragon".*

The very first series of paintings executed by the newly founded Mughal studio is at the same time the most remarkable and unique in conception and quality. In size the surviving folios from the gigantic 12-volume project of the Dastan-i-Amir Hamza, are the largest of all Mughal paintings; in spirit and expression these are also the most powerful and well composed.

In his childhood Akbar was fond of hearing the stories of the heroic exploits of *Amir Hamza*, a mythical figure from Seistan, having the same name as that of the Prophet's uncle. According to one Mughal court chronicle, Humayun initiated the project to prepare 1200 to 1400 large-sized paintings painted on cloth pasted on one side of the folio. Another contemporary writer tells us that it took long 15 years to complete the series. A later historian adds that the project was directed by *Mir Saiyyid Ali* and later on by *Khwaja Abdus-Samad*, and as many as fifty painters comparable with the great Persian master *Bihzad* worked to complete this vast undertaking. Without trying to reconcile between these conflicting evidences we may

12. Cf. Abul Fazl, Ain-i-Akbari, Translated by Blochmann H., Delhi, 1965.

conclude that the project was initiated around 1565-67 on the orders of Akbar and completed by 1580-82.

Not more than 160 illustrations from this unique series have survived, mostly in European and American collections. The present painting and the following one are from the rich holding of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Akbar was fond of fables and animal stories in the childhood and early youth. Stories from the age-old Sanskrit Classics, the *Panchatantra* and *Hitopadesa* were compiled and rendered in Arabian by *'Ibn-al-Muqaffa'* in the eighth century. This celebrated Arabic version, *Kalilah wa Dimnah*, was translated into Persian as *Anwar-i-Suhaili* in the fifteenth century by *Husain Waiz-i-ibn 'Ali al-Kashifi*. Several illustrated manuscripts of this popular work were prepared in Persia and the Islamic world. At least five profusely illustrated copies of *Anwar-i-Suhaili* or its alternate version, *'Iyar-i-Danish'*, were prepared by the Mughal painters (and also at Ahmedabad).

The school's copy, clearly dated in 978 Hijra/1570, containing twenty-seven miniatures of exquisite workmanship, is a key material in the study of early development of the Mughal style. It was prepared when the Hamza project was in progress. Yet the illustrations, none of which bears an attribution, are of a rich and luxurious nature not encountered in the large paintings of the *Hamz Nama*. These also show a happy blending of Persian conventionalism and Mughal realism.

"In this painting the hunter is about to shoot an arrow to the fleeting blackbuck, both rendered with great care and liveliness. The sky is touched up with strokes of green, white, blue, orange and gold. The trees and flowering plants are more naturalistically rendered, though the rocks arranged in coulisses and the river with its plastic turbulence and stony bank follow the set Persian tradition.[13]

Hamza is a massive work comprising 1,400 paintings, took fifteen years to complete. The Persian flavour is extremely strong, but Indian elements are evident in the shape of faces or the vitality and majesty of an elephant.

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13. The Hunter and the Blackbuck, illustration to the *"Anwar-i-Suhaili"*.

Other works that were illustrated in Akbar's reign included the *'Khamsa of Nizami'*, a classic of Persian literature, the romantic tales of Laila and Majnu. *'Shah Nama'*, the great epic of ancient Persian, *'Razm Nama'* the Persian translation of the epic *Mahabharata*, *'Akbar Nama'*, the history of his own rule.

Golden City of Dwaraka : This miniature comes from a now dispersed *Razm Namah*. Though their style may be slightly later, these are almost the equal of the paintings in the celebrated Jaipur copy. The miniature represents the city of Dwaraka, newly built in the instigation of *Krishna*. It replaced Mathura after the ferocious attacks of the demon King *Jarasandha* had caused it to be given up.

Shah Nama was the beautiful manuscript. All the manuscript were destray, the manuscript does not seem to have survived. *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, that sumptuously illustrated copy of the *Shah Nama* had first been deposited in the royal library, this wonderful miniature showing a *"well laid garden of beautiful trees, creeper and flowing shrubs with formal water—cources fed from a sport carved as a bull-head is a closely related to the garden of the Hamza Nama"*.[14]

The miniature shows princess *Rudaba*, daughter of *Mihrab*, king of Kabul, a petit beauty clad in Mughal costume, lets down her long tresses as a rope for the prince zal to climb up to her palace tower.

Badauni has rather critically recorded that, *"Akbar had the shahnamah and the story of Amir Hamzah, transcribed into 17 volumes in 15 years and had spend a large quantity of gold in illustrating it"*.[15]

"Mulla Allauddin Qizvini" in his *Nafais-alMaathir* states that, *"it is now seven years that in compliance with the Royal command of his Imperial Majesty Akbar, Mir has been busy in the Imperial Library, preparing an illustrated edition of the assemblies described in the romance of Amir Hamza. The idea of producing the unique edition is an invention of the radiant genius of his Imperial Majesty and*

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14. Dawn of Mughal Painting - Asok Kumar Das.
15. Cf. Badauni A.Q. Munthkibuttawarikh, Vol.II, Translated by Lave W.H. Bibliothecer India.

the Mir is trying to complete it with scruplous care. It is in fact a book the like of which no one has even seen...." Imperial Majesty (Humayun) Mir Sayyid Ali has been busy in the Imperial Library, preparing an illustrated edition of the assemblies in the romance of Amir Hamzah".[16]

These contemporary references are enough to prove that the work of the Hamza series was started as per Akbar's command. But some confusion pertaining to it's date of execution still exists.

Rai Krishnadasa comments in this regard that *"Abdus Qadir Badauni, the plain-speaking chronider of Akbar, observes that by 1582, when the work on illustrating the Mahabharata was commenced, the illustrations of the Hamza Nama and Shah Nama had been completed, the work having been done over 15 years. In this way, the period of Hamza Nama series falls between 1567 and 1582, if the period of 15 years is to be calculated from 1582".*[17]

But this argument raises an important issue. If the work of the *Hamza Nama* was started in 1567 AD, the twelfth reignal year of Akbar, then we should be told what happened during the long gap of 12 years after Akbar's occasion? It is however, difficult to believe that there had been a sterile period in the court atelier inherited by Akbar, as assumed by S.C. Welch. Even Badauni's statement does not help us that the two manuscripts namely, the *Shah Nama* and the *Hamza Nama* had been the most expensive at it took 15 years to complete them.

Shahnawaz Khan mentions that the *"Hamza Nama was bound in twelve volumes and each volume contained 100 folios and each folio contained two pictures".*[18]

The total comes to 2,400 pictures. Out of this large number, only 150 still survive in different collections still known to us.

These paintings are executed on fine cloth of various sizes. Two folios in Bharat Kala Bhawan are of two different sizes—61cmx71cm and 44.5cmx61cm. Similarly, other folios belong to Vienna and British

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16. Cf. Qizvini Mulla Alauddaulah (Kami) Nafais-al-Maathir Collection Aligarh Muslim University.
17. Cf. Krishnadasa, Rai, Mughal Miniatures, Lalit Kala Akademi, 1955.
18. Cf. Khan Shahnawaz, Maathirul Namah, Vol.II, Translated by Beveadge, H. Calcutta, 1911.

Museums have varied sizes of which a few have been mentioned by Emmy Wellesz.

It appears from the statement of *Shahnawaz Khan* that 50 painters were engaged to complete this *voluminous work,*[19] but no painter has been named, either on the painting or on the margins. Since the chief artists *Mir Saiyyid Ali* and *Khuwaja Abdus Samad* were suprintending the work, the Persian influence in the paintings was inevitable. Clearly, whatever work was done under their guidance bears the stamp of the Persian school. In spite of this, there are certain other elements in the *Hamza* painting which are to be noted. Early attempts at synthesis of Persian and Indian styles can be witnessed in numerous *Hamza* paintings.

Persian ethnic types are very common in the *Hamza paintings,* both in male and female figuration, this was to be expected since the theme was Persian. But, in Persian paintings, the proper representation of a human male figure is rarely shown in profile; there are generally shown in frontal or three-quarter view. In the Hamza, however there are very many paintings which are not only rendered in profile, but are also very skilfully rendered, expressive and fully alive.

In Persian painting movements of figures are slow and thin faces do not depict any emotion or feeling. But, in the Hamza paintings, figures move vigorously and contributed dynamism to the entire composition which is missing completely in an average Persian painting. Some of the figures are garbed in the traditional Persian style, but the majority of them are the costumes and turbans conforming to the style prevalent during Akbar's time in India. The most important feature, however, is the human figuration of the Hamza paintings, it is rendered in bold, rounded lines and the three-dimensional roundness of form that are important to them.

These two features along with the dynamism of the figures in the Hamza paintings mark them as somewhat different from the general trend of classical Persian painting out of the 15th and 16th centuries.

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19. Cf. Khandalavala Karl and Mittal Jagdish, "An Early Illustrated Manuscript of Tilasm and Zodiac", Lal Kala, No.14, New Delhi, 1969.

It is a strange happening that Persian ethnic types in female figuration is extremely rare if not completely absent. Infact, even in the Hamza paintings which are the earliest Mughal court paintings, female figuration, speaking generally, is typically Indian, not only in appearance, stances and movements but also in costumes, ornaments and head-dresses. Truely, the female figures of the *Hamza* paintings appear to have been painted in a tradition which is closely linked to the 16th century *'Chaurakanchasika Series'* of paintings. In these two, one cannot miss the modelled lines and the three-dimensional rounded vision which impart to all figures, men and animals, trees and places etc. a depth and dynamism, which are absent from classical Persian painting.

Even at this early stage of Mughal painting, there was a fusion between the classical Persian manner and method on one hand and what may be termed as Indian manner and method on the other. The bold, roundly modelled lines with shades, the three-dimensional volume and the dynamic movement came presumably from the Indian classical tradition. It is not impossible, that part of it may have been influenced by contemporary European Renaissance painting, as for example, the drapery of some of the figures in the Hamza painting, the naturalistic treatment of the trees and the three-dimensional vision in a general way.

It is not merely the elephant which is represented naturalistically in its full rounded volumes brought about by round modelled lines and tonal qualities of colour but all other animals as well, except the horse and the bull which are usually done in the Persian manner. The dynamism and naturalism of form which is imparted to the *Hamza* paintings is very different from the static feel of the Persian paintings. Moreover, quite some times, some animals are represented in a suprisingly naturalistic manner, for example the figures of lion, monkey, goats in the painting described as *Kausaj* finds *Zamurrad* sleeping.

Here, in the treatment of these figures are noticed a new-method Chiaroscuro work, which is found either in the classical Persian or Indian tradition. I

have selected only a few paintings to show the synthesis of Persian and Indian style.

1. Kausaj finds Zamurrad sleeping.[20]

2. Ibrahim carried to battle by gints.[21]

These painting are actually landscape set in architectural frameworks. This manuscript consists of the duality of the heroic and romantic deeds of Amir Hamza and his associates, the general trend of the illuminated folios remained narrative.

"A much analysed painting in the one the shows the great, Zamurrad, sleeping and being watched by Kausaj. The right top corner has a rural scene which is subjectively completely unconnected with the main subject of the painting. This rural scene consists of two women coming to draw water from the village well, groups of crows and buffaloes in the neighbourhood, a shephered, a man milking a buffalos, couple of houses with thatched roofs, among other things. Not only that, the two women have typically Indian facial and physiognomical features and Indian dress and ornaments, the other figures also are very Indian in appearance and environs. So are the figures of the peacock, the cranes and the monkeys and the environment created by the rich provincial vegetation in the larger area of the painting."

It's quite evident that the rural scene at the top right corner was for filling up the space left in the larger composition which was thematically, formally and stylistically different, and that it represents one of the various indigeneous forms and styles that were current in North India in pre-Akbar times. From its formal character it appears that it was the folkish protoype of what later contributed towards the making of Rajasthani painting.

But, it was not merely that the Persian and the Indian that were being synthesised into one integrated form and style. Here and there certain features which appear to have sourced their inspiration from the paintings of the European Renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries have already been referred to.

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20. Collection: Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
21. Collection: Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

The manuscript of *Tilasm* and *Zodiac* preserved in the Raza Library, Rampur contains 16 folios only, each folio being 18"x13". The paintings have been rendered on both sides of each paper folio and are lived with a coarse line. The paintings do not carry any signature, nor is there only proof in the manuscripts or in the paintings to depict that the paintings were executed under emperor Akbar's command. But the form and style of paintings have a very close affinity to those of the *Hamza* paintings and their very quality suggests direct royal patronage and a data which is very close to that of the *Hamza*. Obviously, the theme of magic too is closely related to the magical subject of the *Hamza*. *"Akbar in his younger days, appears to have been very fond of these magical stories."*

For analysis, following three paintings have been chosen by me.

i) *A man utters unitelligible words.*[22]

ii) *Slave girls sporting in a stream.*[23]

iii) *A man resembling a fakir.*[24]

The first painting presents a well-dressed man in red *chakdar-jamah*, green turban, white scarf and blue shoes, sitting on a rock and appears to be addressing at bird resting on a tree at the left. The second illustration depicts a stream flowing out of a rock, in which four girls frolick. The third painting presents a male figure with a staff, seated on a rock piece; at first sight the figure looks like Shiva holding a trident, seated in the Himalayas.

The compositions in the first two paintings are naturalistic with a sense of space green trees, yellow flowers and blue sky are conceived and worked out from this approach. The naturalistic treatment is specially obvious in the treatment of trees. This treatment, as already indicated, is so similar to the treatment of trees in contemporary European Renaissance painting, that a contact between the two cannot altogether be ruled out.

Yet, simultaneously, the conventional Persian approach and treatment is strongly marked in the rendering of rocks and water. In third painting

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22. Collection: Raza Library, Rampur.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.

refered to above, Persian features are most noticeable in the rendering of the chinar tree and golden sky.

But, the most un-Persian like character of the paintings is visible in the treatment of numerous motifs which have been clearly given a three-dimensional effect. Depth is created through light and shades at places where needed, and the pattern of light and shade move as per the formation of various motifs. For example, *the foreground rock is horizontal, the left one is vertical and the top right one circular. The strokes of brush and pattern of shade correspond therefore to the same direction, and result in a dynamic pattern round the figure.*[25]

Human figuration in all the three compositions had been arranged so as to suggest that they were rendered on-the-spot; so lovely and natural are they. The gestures, facial contours, anatomical proportions, in fact, their physiognomy and movement speak of their frank Indian affliation. The figure with many faces, looking in different directions, the orange staff black and white ethereal skin all seem to have been lifted from Hindu religious motifs. The group of girls sporting in water with their garments hung on a tree beside the stream, remind one immediately of the famed Krishna-Lila episode.

The sharp, bold lines delicately shaded, help bring-out the figures of men and women and the hillocks in relief, these lines give a sense of depth and in their broad brush-strokes give the impressive mural quality which characterises the Hamza painting.

But the paintings of the *Tilasm* and *Zodiac* are not as crowded or dynamic as those of the Hamza. Here, only the relevant figures are introduced, as one finds in Persian paintings. Yet, the nature of the composition of these few figures is such and they are so much dramatised that they appear to be of a different world of vision and execution. This world is of traditional Indian art. Here too, a creative fusion between Persian and Indian was taking place.

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25. Art and Persia - Dr. Anis Faruqi.

Similarly, in Akbari paintings, no authentic portrait of the harem as seen whatever female figures were depicted in the paintings were either servants or court dancers or musicians.

The anatomy of Indian and Persian is the same as the Akbari paintings, the only difference being that the figures in the Akbari paintings are more proportionate and well-ordered. In pre-Akbari indigenous paintings, male figures generally appear in a dhoti with a long scarf over a naked torso.

In the female figures, there were two kinds. Women were dressed in a sari or skirt and blouse. Often there is a petka, the end of which goes below upto the ankles of the figure. A transparent or opaque odhni was also worn. The decorations of pearl jewellery and ornaments are used profusely. However, from the illuminated folios, it is clear that the latter type of costume was extensively worn both in the lower and upper class of society of that period.

In the Akbar paintings too, the later category remained prominent following the tradition of the manuscripts: *Laurchanda,*[26] *Mahapurana,*[27] *Chaurapanchasika, Geeta Govinda*[28] etc. The earlier Akbari paintings like the *Tuti Nama* certain a strong Indian traditional influence in the execution of female figures, but in the later manuscript like the *Tuti Nama,* there is a strong Indian traditional influence in the rendered in the female figures, but in the later manuscripts like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata,* this style becomes more sophisticated and the transparent effect of the odhni is extremely elaborate.

There is also a tradition of continuity in the appearance of male-type costumes in the Akbari paintings. The *chakdar-jamah,* narrow long *petka,* narrow trousers and trousers which were medieval Indian costumes in vogue had also been followed by the Mughals. The proof of this fashion in. pre-Akbari India can be traced through the manuscripts of the *Chaurapanchasika* and the *Laurchanda.* However, it appears that the Kulahdar turban which was fashionable during the Sultanate period was

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26. Laur-Chanda; Probably Jaunpur, U.P. c.1550-1575, John Rylands Library, Manchester.
27. Bhagvata Purana, Probably U.P., c. AD 1525-1570, collection: National Museum, Delhi.
28. Gita-Govinda, Probably U.P., c. AD 1525-1570, collection: Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.

not worn in Akbar's reign and thus, it is rarely depicted in the Akbari manuscript painting.

Tuti Nama (1560-1568 AD) is a romantic composition centering round the story of a parrot. It was written by *Ziauddin* in the early 14th century and copied in the court in 1560's. It appears that three copies of this manuscript are extant one in the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art, the other in the Chester Beatty Library and the third in the Library of Baron ES Feuillet de Conches. The Baron's copy contains 103 miniatures. According to Gray, the Chester Beatty manuscript is also lavishly illustrated and the range of colours appear to be more Indian than Persian. Here, the following three illustrations are reproduced from the Cleveland copy.

i) The lady talking to a parrot.[29]

ii) A fowler extolling the virtues of a parrot by Basawan.[30]

iii) Within a walled enclosure, monkey bites a young man by Daswant.[31]

Compositionally, the first painting frankly reminds us of the painting of the *Laurachanda-Charuapanchasika manuscript* of the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay. It is symmetrical in arrangement; the pavilions with projecting cornices; the placement of decorative pots follow convention. In the second painting also, the artist-*Basawan*, seems to have followed practically the same architectural feature and compositional scheme.

But *Daswant*, the painter of the third illustration appears to have been inspired more by the Persian tradition, since he worked under the direct supervision of the Persian Master *Abdus Samad* from his very early life. The decorative and geometrical elements in his composition are handled very efficiently and depict professional skill. One fact is these paintings which deserves special mention is that the architectural setting is treated in a flat two-dimensional manner, without proper consideration of perspective.

The presentation of landscapes, generally, stick to the Persian tradition. This is very clear in *Daswant's* painting where the sky is hired in gold and

29. Collection: Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, U.S.A.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.

trees are treated quite decoratively. But *Basawan* renders the sky and trees somewhat differently; he appears to have adopted the contemporary European manner in the rendering of the sky and the trees in the background.

But in the *Tuti Nama* a Kulahdar turban is shown but there is no noticeable projection of the kulah similar to the style appearing in the Mahapurana of 1540.

Anwar-i-Suhaili (1570 A.D.) this manuscript, a book of fables, dated 1570 AD and belonges to the collection of the school of oriental and African studies, University of London. It is important in the sense that this is the only illustrated manuscript of the early Mughal period which is dated and shows the starting of Indian naturalism introduced into a Persian background. The flush-cut composition is the principal characteristic of these painting as can be seen in the following two folios selected by me.

i) Monkey and bears.[32]

ii) Monkey.[33]

It seems that originally, for the text matters, some more space on the left side of the folios was given by the margin drawer, but may be the space for the requisite illustration was later felt to be inadequate. Consequently, the original middle margins were removed. The impressions still exist, can be seen clearly. However, in both the compositions, two major elements namely, the landscape and animal figuration deserve notice.

The general treatment of the hillocks, the use of decorative and spray-type trees, the water streams as also the trees extending well beyond the margin give ample evidence to indicate that the artist seems to be influenced by Persian traditions. But a closer study of the paintings reveals that the general atmosphere and treatment are much more simple than the Persian classical tradition.

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32. Collection: School of Oriental and African Studies, London.
33. Ibid.

The most fashionable turban of that time which Akbar himself called the *'Sees Sobha'* was perhaps the approved official turban. It was literary an improved style of the turban which appeared in the *Laurchanda-Chaurapanchasika* and the *Mahapurana*. But, this very head-dress remained in vogue during Akbar's reign and thus, in almost all the contemporary paintings male figures are shown wearing the same turbans appear in different styles covering a period commencing from the styles of the Persian manuscript of *Jami-al-Tawarith* of Rashiuddin to the contemporary Akbar's styles.

In the pre-Mughal Indian paintings, the gestures of figures were restricted. They moved only in certain directions and as a consequence, the static, manneristic compositions are observable. But this rigidity of figures disappeared in the Akbari paintings. For example, in the earlier manuscripts like the *Tuti Nama* and the *Dastan-i-Amir Hamza*, human beings seem very natural with a wide repertoire of poses and stances. In the later manuscripts like the *Babur Nama* and *Akbar Nama*, there is a good amount of heroic and adventurous display. Thus, it is proved beyond doubt that the only objective of the Akbari painters was to capture significant movements of human life and give them an eternal character. The same staticness of figures as aforementioned in the case of pre-Mughal paintings was also a chief characteristic of Persian painting before the advent of Bihzad. May be, for the very first time, *Bihzad* attempted to break this monotony by representing figures as realistically as possible, but it appears that he neglected the expressions of the figures. Therefore, the Bihzadian figures lack feeling. Realising this negative aspect of Persian painting, the Akbari painters tried to full in this gap. Their brush could skillfully depict expressions of anger, joy, pain, sorrow, disappointment and surprise. In the *Akbar Nama*[34] by the Victoria and Albert Museum, there is an illustration depicting emperor Akbar in a fierce rage, dressed in a dhoti and scarf, felling Adhani Khan with the blow of his fist and having him flung headlong from the walls of the harem terrace. This is one of the most successful and representative examples of capturing the mood.

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34. Historical Events of Akbar's Period.

In pre-Mughal Indian painting, the themes were mostly romantic and religious. Therefore, the battle scenes and depiction of soldiers in Indian painting had been very few. But, the representation of the army in the *Mahapurana manuscripts* is very coarse and puppet-like. The soldiers seen in the *Lakpasutra* and *Kalata Chauja Katha* are evidently Persian in character.

Conversely, Persian being a militant race had been basically interested in wars. A soldier was given a heroic rank. The Persian *Shah Nama* is a testimonial to this fact and is full of heroic events and battle fields.

Sufis and saints were popular themes in Persian painting. The same tradition was continued in Akbari paintings. Akbar was a devout believer of Sufism. Thus, the manuscripts of historical treatises like the Akbarnamah and the *Babur Nama* depict many instances showing Sadhus and saints in their various pre-occupations:-meditation and rendering social service. In the *Akbar Nama* of Victoria and Albert Museum, there is an illustration depicting a fierce armed clash between two groups of Sadhu which is unique in its character.

The other salient feature which Akbari painters introduced in their painting was the exposition of different classes of people. It seems that this was attempted in Persian paintings first by *Bihzad*. For example, in his one of his paintings he has skilfully shown a group of labourers busy in building a fortress. This gives evidence to the fact the *Bihzad* studied the lower classes of people very closely. Similarly, in the *Akbar Nama* and many other contemporary manuscripts such working people very shown in great detail. The boatmen, water bearers, betel sellers, labourers, disabled people etc have been very naturalistically rendered.

The appearance of *Basawan's* name in the *Tuti Nama* and his use of indigenous aforementioned architectural settings in his composition, is evidence that in North India, if not in other places, a special architectural pattern was used in painting to the extent of mannerism. There are numerous pictures depicting a nayak-nayika composition within a verandah type

chamber. In the *Kalpasutra*, the *Aranyaka Purana* and the *Laurchanda*, the pavilion is simple but in the *Bhagwat Purana* and the *Chaurapanchasika*, the pavilions are profusely embellished with designs and patterns. *Basawan* also used decorative patterns in the pavilions.

In the *Hamza*, the architectural patterns have taken a synthetic shape. Both Persian and Indian standard architectural prototypes seemed to have been rendered with a distinguishing aptitude for decorative realism. However, gradually, the decorative features began disappearing from the Akbari painting. The architectural settings became majorly realistic, probably based on contemporary archiectural designs. Such instance can be sited from manuscript like *Akbar Nama*, *Babur Nama* and *Baharistan-i-Jami*.

Our analysis of the painting of the Akbari studio, clearly shows that it was his tradition which was largely used to bear upon the imparted classical tradition from Persia. In the process, inspite of being manuscript illuminations and small scale album painting Akbari painting came to attain the quality of large scale.

Mughal painting of the Akbari period, happen to be a creative fusion of all the elements referred to.

MY FINDING AND CRITICAL EVALUATION

This title assumes the existence of more than a single Indian style painting adopted by artists of Indian origin which fused in work a singular or more styles of contemporary Persia. A detailed study of paintings of the former period of Akbar's reign prove this assumption to be correct. It's as a well-known and accepted fact that the Mughal school was unique when compared to the schools a styles which had preceded or succeeded it.

Though it is a fact that the Mughal school originated from the Timurid and Safavid styles of Persia yet it achieved an identity

and integrity which was unique to it. The extent to which this identity and intergrity was achieved has been studied exhaustively in the recent years and new facts and information have come to light. This research and analysis of new materials has been conducted by well-versed scholars.

It has been noted that the Jain style of manuscript illustration influenced the Mughal school and vice-versa. In certain paintings of this school of the 15th and early sixteenth century characteristics typical to the contemporary Persian painting can be clearly seen. However, at the same time, one must state that the nature and character of this fusion and its consequences which can be seen in the paintings themselves have nothing in common with the what happened in Mughal painting even in its very early stages.

The manuscript of the Diwan-i-Amir Khusaru, a Persian text of Indian origin has illustrations whose styles appears to be majorly uninfluenced by the then popular Indian style of the Jain manuscripts. Other profusely illustrated manuscripts also may be particularly observed for their Persian origin.

The discovery of the Nimatnamah (the book of delicacies) is a milestone in the history of pre-Mughal painting. From the illuminations, it seems that it's artists attempted to Indianize the Persian tradition. Although, the delicacy and sophistication seen in the Herat Style is not present, yet there is a favouring of greater simplification. Similarly the Muflahul-Fuzala, a Persian lexicograph, the Gulistan-i-Sadi also indicate the same strong *Shūaz* school tradition.

The chronology of a group of manuscript illustration usually referred to as the Chaurapan-Chasika series has been the topic of controversy among a group of art historians. One school of scholars associates these with the pre-Mughal Rajput school

whereas another school thinks that the Rajput miniature school was not-existence prior to or contemporary to the Mughal school.

Numerous paintings of manuscripts such as the Dastan-i-Amir Hamza, Tutinama etc. have very many features that happen to the typical characteristics of the illustrations of the Laur-Chanda-Chaurapanchasika group referred to above, simultaneously with an increasing amount of features drawn from contemporary Persian paintings of both metropolitan and provincial centres.

But the most important contribution to our knowledge has been made in regard to the history of the origin of Mughal painting itself. Significantly, it relates to the role played by Humayun and also Akbar's contribution to it.

The tale of Humayun's exile at Persian's Shah Tahmasp's Court, his interest in the painting school that was being followed in the court, it's techniques, his personal relationship with numerous Persian artists, the invitations he extented to Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad, who finally accompanied him to Delhi are well-known. New facts, however, have also been discovered.

Indian painting's contact with their Persian counterparts has a long history, at any rate from the 10th and 11th centuries A.D. The Persian paintings and manuscript illustrations influenced the Indian paintings to an extent. But, the question which arises is as to why, despite the influences of the Persian as well as the Deccan schools, the sultanate court painting was not at all similar to the Mughal school?

In answer to this query once assumes that there must have existed several other forms and styles of Indian painting which aided the making of what Mughal painting came to be during Akbar's reign. Whatever factual information we have does not

signify that Humayun ever aimed at organizing any activity of the sort that Akbar did for works such as. The Dastan-i-Amir Hamza, the Tutinama etc. All that Humayun's Tasvir-Khana seems to prove to that an art studio was what other medieval emperors and were maintained as part of their libraries.

Persian ethnic types are very common in the Hamza paintings, both in male and female figuration. But unlike the Persian paintings, the human male figure is often shown in profile, its not in the Persian general frontal or three-quarter view. The figures are skilfully rendered, impressive and fully alive unlike their Persian counterparts. The faces have vigorous expression and the entire composition unlike the static and expressionless Persian paintings. The most important feature of the Hamza paintings is that it's rendered in bold, rounded lines and there is a three-dimensional roundness of form.

Its obvious that in human figuration, depiction of nature, the artist has attempted to draw in a time-to-life manner.

It's peculiar that female figuration is extremely rare in Persian ethnic types. In the Hamza paintings, the female figures seem to have been painted in a tradition which is closely linked to the 16th century Chaurapanchasika series referred to earlier. We know as a certainity that even at this early stage of Mughal painting, there was a fusion between the classical Persian and Indian classical tradition. The dynamism and naturalism of form which is imparted to the Hamzah paintings as, very different from the static feel of the Persian paintings. One also notices the neo-method chiaroscuro work, which is either in classical Persian or Indian tradition. Three dimensional effects with aerial perspectives have also been shown. The landscapes are however in the famed Shiraz style but with greater use of bold outlines and shading.

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Indigenous Indian and Persian floral and plants motifs have been used.

It is also noted that there is a deliberate attempt to present figures in their relative sizes and proportions as to give the impression of perspective, which we assume indicates knowledge and experience of perspective in Rennaissance European art.

The paintings of the Tilasm and Zodiac also follow naturalistic treatment which is similar to that of contemporary European Renaissance painting. Yet, Persian treatment is also strongly marked in the depiction of many elements unlike Persian paintings, three-D effect has been obtained by using the light and shade Rennaissance technique. The Human figuration are however frank in their Indian affliation. Here too, a creative synthesis of the Persian and Indian was taking place.

The romance and eventual marriage of Dewal Devi with Prince Khizir Khan than inspired Amir Khusrau to write a poem on this theme, written in Nastaliq now with the National Museum. The paintings are partly decorative and partially narrative. The style is somewhat Persian in some paintings and like the Laurchanda-Chaurapan-Chasika in others. What is very noticeable in the Indian affliation, are the strong lines, roundness of limbs and drapes. Unlike Persian miniature, the glaze and luminosity have been subdued.

The *Tuti Nama* is a romantic composition centering around a parrot's story. Compositional and architectural schemes of it's paintings are similar to that of the Laurchanda-Chaurapanchasika though Basawan's treatment is more sophisticated. But some of the paintings and characteristic, specially the landscapes are in the Persian tradition. The human figuration is also in the

Chaurapanchasika style coupled with the western light and shade treatment.

The Anwar-i-Suhaili is a book of fables. It's important in the content that it is the only illustrated manuscript of the early Mughal period which is dated and shows the beginning of Indian naturalism imparted to a Persian setting. Though the general landscape of the paintings appear to be rendered in the Persian tradition, but the general atmosphere and treatment is much more relaxed and similar than the Persian. The effect of sciagraphy and other techniques adapted from the western Renaissance and Indian classical traditions can be seen. The rendering of animals is as close to real-life as possible, an attempt to create a 3-D effect has also been noted. Subjugation of the glaze and luminosity of the Persian tradition has result in a soothing effect.

The human figures in Akbari paintings are proportionate and well ordered. However, no authentic portraits of the harem can be seen. The common women and the court dancers and attendants who were shown depict a strong Indian traditional influence. Both the male and female figures are smartly attired according to that period's fashion and follow body contours. The extensively applied style of modelling is European. For the first time, in Akbari paintings, one can see the skilfully depicted the various, human emotions.

Battlefield scenes are forceful, strong and active. Sadhu's and saints are also painted often. Another salient feature which Akbari painters introduced in their painting was the exposition of different classes of people.

The architectural motifs in Akbari paintings are both Persian and Indian prototypes. Though the early setting had a distinguishing aptitude for the decorative. Later settings became majorly realistic.

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The depiction of trees, foliage and landscapes in the Akbari paintings marked the beginning of realistic representation. Both Persian and Indian foliage was rendered, but the initial decorative aspect disappeared. Thus, in the later Akbari manuscript they are seen only when absolutely necessary. The Akbari painter attempted to portray nature as accurately as possible. There is a preference for modelling through light and shade.

In rendering of landscapes, gave a true feeling of space within the picture-plane. A sense of space and perspective was created. Experts opine that this sense of expression was sourced from European aesthetics.

The Mughals were great lovers of nature, specially interested in water streams. Akbari manuscripts are illustrated with beautiful scenes where technique used was identical to the Persian one. Waves were given decorative finishes, stipling was also used. The fundamental structure of the stream is Persian, resembling the outer surface of fish-scales, and failed in creating the desired transparency.

The drawing mountains and hillocks, the Akbari painters followed the Persian tradition; but they appeared to have experimented with this motif in different ways. To add effect of volume, intensive modelling and roundness through sciagraphy was done. In the Akbari tradition, the Persian feature of incorporating certain shapes of animal and human figures was also copied.

Cosmetic clouds shown in the Akbari paintings were based on the western model, giving roundness, volume and simultaneously a feel of softness.

In depicting animals and birds, the painters had a command over the drawing and painting of both wild and domestic animals and

the maximum realistic effects were produced. Birds were given due preference and serious attempts were made to study them. Consequently they were drawn and rendered as accurately as possible.

The composition of the Akbari paintings was the same as the Parsi tradition, which the paintings generally in a vertical formation. The compositions compartmentalized the various elements using walls, tents etc and fused them into a rythmic singular space. Apart from these *"receptacles"*, the compositions in the Akbari paintings also follow various European geometrical methods.

The use of *"multiple perspectives"* in plastic art form was popular in the sub-continent of India and Persia during the medieval period. It remained unchanged till about the end of the 16th century, when Akbar's atelier was exposed to European painters for the first time. Henceforth, volume and space in the Akbari paintings compositions were created through the western device of light and shade.

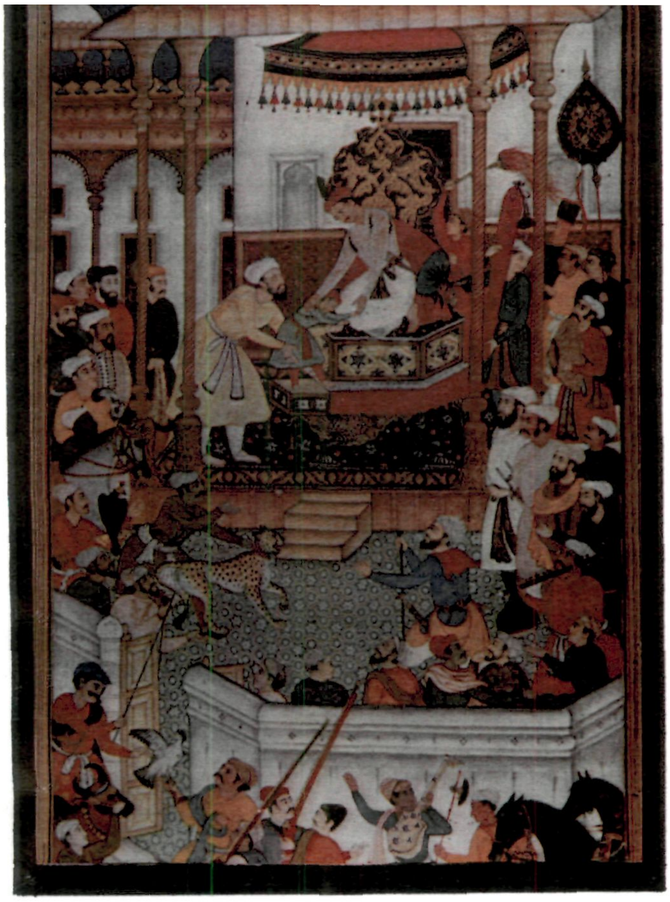
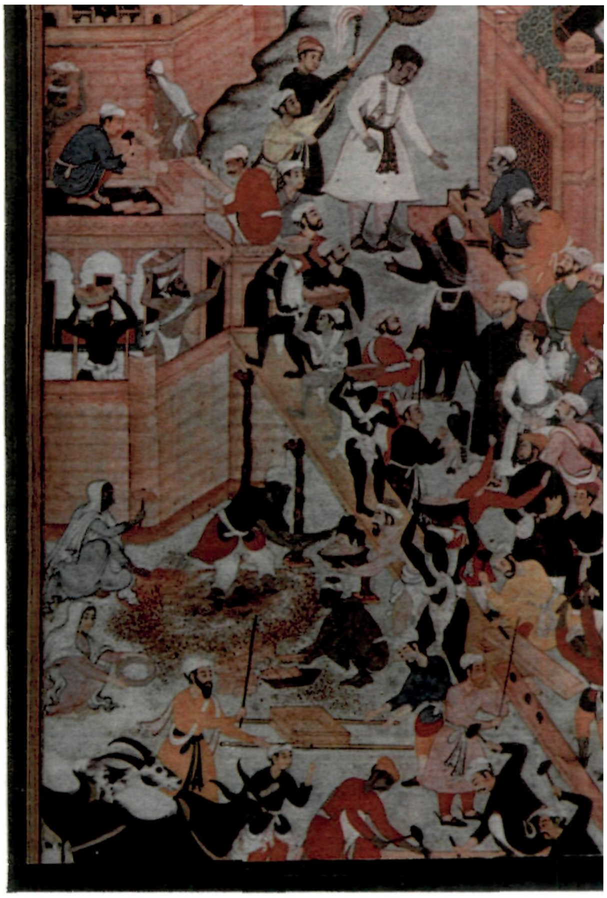
Akbar's painters adopted the linear rythm of the Indian and Persian traditions. The whole framework of the art of painting was based on the line. The mastery of line reach such a pinnacle in Mughal work that some historians have assumed that their work was done by a one-hair brush (though it was never the case). In the paintings of Basawan, however, depth is created by the use of choppy lines and stipling.

In the context of colour, Akbari painters opted for a sober paltete using what is termed in modern times as the tempera medium, which was a purely Indian device. The Akbari painters used this medium very effectively. Through colours and their appropriate application, painters had make their compositions life-like. As a western device, the colours in the foreground of the picture plane are of darken hues and the background lighter.

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Akbari painting, from the very beginning, was different from contemporary, classical Persian painting and there were numerous other elements in it which could not be explained by any reference to Persian art. These elements were mostly Indian, belonging to residual classical and contemporary medieval traditions. Akbar's decision that he was an Indian, helped in the acclimatizing of his Persian cultural inheritance with that of India.

Indeed, the very social composition and historical character of Akbar's studio conditioned and determined a varied form and style of art which was reflected, in various degrees of fusion and integration. Elements of various forms and traditions of painting like Persian, contemporary medieval Indian, ancient Indian, classical folk-art or whatever residue that remained of it and even contemporary European traditions.

Chapter V




Work and Style
Of
Painting
Of
Various
Mughal Artists

"The colour , like in the majority of Akbar period miniature , is strong and variated in effect and yet a mellowness pervades the pictures due to the harmony of the colour scheme and colour proportions"

While most of the major manuscripts of the 1580's has illustrations designed by a singular artist and executed by an assistant, the system became less satisfactory in the 1509's when the imperial taste was more refined, demanding uniformally high quality. There does not appear to have been any logic, other than a demand for a consistency within each individual project, for the assignment of joint, rather than unassisted workmanship the major designers were the men first listed in Abu'l Fazl's important discussion of painters.

He says, *"more than a hundred painters have become famed masters of art, while the number of those who approach perfection, as of those who are middling, is very large. This is specially true of the Hindus, their pictures surpass our conception of things. Few, indeed in the world are found equal to them, among the fore winners on the high road of art".*[1]

Mughal artist look like a somewhat timorous, bunch their bodies in the universal position of the servitor, these great masters who worked at the Mughal Court. Mughal masters; further studies edited by Ashok Kumar Das retrieves them from the comparative oblivion of their signatures, continuing the tradition started by Master artists of the imperial court edited by Pratapaditya pal and now out of print.

There's Khwaja Abdus Samad also known as *Shirin qalam*[2] for his ability to draw a *'horseman on a poppy seed'*; and *Mir Saiyyid Ali* who went-one step further and drew a polo match with eight horses a grain of rice and was known as the rarity of our times; *Daswant* who was discovered drawing on the walls and instead of being punished for graffiti, ended up in Akbar *taswirkhana*; who could tell a story in a picture dividing its space into events; *Kesu Das* who painted the presentatioin of Christ in the temple and Saint Matthew the *evangelist*; *Farrukh Beg* who painted shahids or

1. The Imperial Image Painting for Mughal Court - M.C. Beach.
2. Sweet Pen.

witnessers to the mystical experiences of the sufis and the venerable saints too; *Bishandas* who was considered by emperor Jahangir as unequalled in his age for taking likeness and *Govardhan*, the son of a failed painter.

This is an important book because we have a tendency to monolithise these artists; we see them as a bunch, a brigade. Their work is only collectively considered under the Mughal painting. For a privileged elite, they paradoxically share their situation with the triple artists that Shella Cauby rejoices that *"no one has studied the iconography of his horses"*. And so in this collection of essays. We now know that Daswant, the son of a palanquin bearer suffered so acutely from melancholia that he committed suicide but Ashok Kumar Das does not explore sufficiently how someone so troubled could work within the comparatively restricting conditions imposed by the *taswirkhana*. We know that the Jesuits brought with them prints of the flemish and German painters which in turn influenced Kesu Das but Amina Okada is silent about the negotiations that a Hindu painter operating in our time. We read them in cliches, in their sophisticated use of form, their jewel tones, their symbols and metaphors. But we deny them their identities as artists and individuals.

Some have, of course, fared better than others. *Mir Saiyyid Ali* is now so well researched muslim court would have to make in order to produce christian icons. Similarly, we agree with Das that Farrukh Beg's venerable saints combine a christian saintlines with muslim sufihood but beyond that here is little to feed us. *"The problem, of course, lies in the sources. In same cases, there are few in others, there are none. But sources are only a beginning. And the challenge lies in extrapolating from those sources, taking risks with them pushing from the known and the seen into the suggested and the possible"*.[3]

Colour Preparations: Pigments were prepared by processing minerals and ochres. A variety of shades were obtained by mixing the two. Vegetable colours included indigo, lac dye and carmine, carbon from various sources produced black. Gold and silver powders, black and red ink were used for

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3. Article in News Paper "The Hindu".

both writing and painting. In the pictorials the writing was in black, the borders in red, but certain manuscripts were completely done in gold and silver. Reading them is quite difficult but one deduces that they were not meant to be read but were objects of devotion and were a yardstick to assess the wealth of the commissioning patrons.

According to the *Shilpratna*, a sixteenth century Sanskrit treatise, grey which was derived from burnt conch shell or white earth, white elephant apple juice and gum from the neem tree. The gum served as a binding medium. The same treatise gives the following recipe for obtaining black pigment. In an earthen cup filled with oil, the wick is saturated with oil and lit. Then a globular earthen pot, with the inside besmeared with cowdung, is placed over the flames. The lampback sticking on the inside of the pot should then be scraped, kneaded in an earthen pot and allowed to dry. It should be mixed with neem water and then dried. Another recipe is to take a barley sized grain of element, possibly antimony, grind it to a fine powder, mix it with elephant apple juice and let it dry.

The different hues of red defined as soft red, medium red and deep red can be obtained from red lead, red ochre and shellac dye. Red ochre was extensively used in ancient paintings and red lead was the preferred material with Jain Painters of western India.

To obtain red lead, white lead was roasted in an open fire until it turned a deep colour. The red coloured bead was ground for a half a day in water and the process was repeated for twenty hours after five days. Gum extracted from the neem tree was used as a binder.

For vermillion, crude cinnabar was throughly ground in a mortar with the aid of sugared water or lime juice. It was allowed to settle and the yellowish water drained off. To get the purest colour, the process was repeated upto fifteen times or more, after which it was again levigated with sugared water or lime juice and gum. It was thoroughly mixed, then shaped into tablets and dried. To ensure that first the required quantity of gum had

been added, the powder was examined several times during its making. As a test, a piece of paper was sprinkled with the colour's solution, folded and kept in a damp place; if the ends did not glue immediately the prepared was acceptable. It, after drying the cinnabar spots on the paper flaked off when scraped with a fingernail, more gum was needed.

Red was also prepared from shellac dye and was mixed with other colours to obtain various shades. To prepare it, water was boiled, in its powdered lac resin was mixed gradually and stirred constantly to prevent the resin from solidifying. Then the temperature of water was raised and lode and borax powders were added every few minutes. To test the colour, a pen was dipped in the solution and a few lines were drawn on paper. It the ink did not flake or crack, the colour was ready. The mixture was then removed from the fire after the solution had evapourated only the residual colour was left. The following proportions were used:- 1/4 seer (1 seer is 2.18 lbs) of water, 1 tola (80 tolas make a seer) or good dry resin of the pipal tree called lakhdana 1/2 tola pathani lode, and one anna (1/16 of a tola) borax. If the painting was to be made on palm leaves, then 1/4 tola of *madder*, a creeper with yellow flowers, was added to darken the shade.

For blue, the main substance was indigo, mixed with other colour to produces different hues. Blue was also extracted from lapis-lazuli, although this was a difficult and complicated process because this stone contains calcite which is white in colour and iron pyrites which give it a golden lustre. Methods of extracting blue from lapis-lazuli were unknown before the thirteenth century.

Yellow was extracted from opriment. It was thoroughly ground to the consistensy of fine, white flour and sifted. It was again levigated with gum-arabic solution. Another way was to boil a caly's urine which had been fed on mango leaves for a few days. After the water had evaporated, the residue was rolled into balls which were dried first on a charcoal fire and subsequently in the sun.

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As a colouring agent, gold has been used in India from ancient times. The gold leaf was crumbled to tiny pieces and then mixed with sand and water, and was thoroughly levigated in a smooth stone mortar. When the gold was reduced to a powder, it was transferred into a glass cup and the sand and dust were removed by washing. After the impurity-free gold was obtained, it was mixed with glue and ready to be used. After the surface of the painting received the application of gold, was berenished with a boar's lust to impart glass. Another way was to initially sketch the design that required gold application and then stencil a similar design on the gold leaf. This stencilled cut-out was then affixed to the surface and rubbed down with cotton wool.

For the preparation of gold and silver powders, gold or silver leaves were levigated with dhan gum solution in a hard stone mortar. The fine powder obtained, it was dissolved in sugared water and thoroughly stirred. This process was repeated till there were no traces of the gum. After being dried, the powder was ready to be used.

For little quantities, glass dish was smeared with gum, then the gold or silver leaf pasted on it and reduced to powder with the finger. It was then dissolved in sugared water and the same process repeated. The Mughal painter used honey in place of the dhua gum. After the gold leaf was ground, water was added and the mixture was served through a finally woven cloth, constantly stirred. So that no particles remained on the strainer. The mixture was allowed to remain undisturbed for fifteen hours and then the water was gradually seeped off. The basin's mouth was covered with cloth to keep dust off. Size was then added as a binder. Just the right amount of size was added in one go, for if it was less, it wouldn't stick to the painting and if it was more, it could not be burnished and the gold used would lose its' sheen.

For making the size, the *Vishnudharholtara Purana* states: *"Pieces of bufallo hide are boiled in water until they are as soft as butter. The water is then evaporated*

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and the paste is shaped into sticks and dried in the sunshine. When required, a stick is boiled with water in a mud vessel fines and tempers colours and steps them flaking." Sirdura tree gum is recommended as an astringent for tempering colours. Along with size, neem gum is favoured as an astringent for conch shell and systen shell powders. In paper manuscripts gum arabic was used for all colours except zinc white and yellow pepri; dhan gum was the preferred binder for these two colours.

Formulae was also devised for obtaining different hues by mixing colours. For example, opriment mixed with deep brown yield the colour of parrot feathers, yellow and lampblack in a proportion of two to one produced the skin tone for the commoners; lampback mixed with shellac dye yielded deep purple, lampback and indigo gone the colour of hair, red ochre added to conch shell lime fielded the shade of shioke as did lampblack; zinc white and shellac dye gave rose colour, Jalatiuga dye, white, vermillion mixed in equal parts gave the skin tone of the higher castes.

The treatment of pigments in the wash of a tinge was known to the Mughals though, rarely. The process involved first, the thin wash of a tinge on the paper's surface. The base when dried-up, is ready for brush-work. Subsequently, outline of the objects is drawn in colour to distinguish from the background. Other colours to be filled in the various objects viz. costumes, utensils, buildings etc. etc. are obtained from the gradations i.e. tint or shade of the ground colour; and thus the painting is finished in harmonised colour scheme. The tree-trunks, its foliage and sky etc. remain submerged in the background. Though the monotonous effect is winover by the aritst who employs fine, shaded lines to represent the anatomy of figures, details in the objects and fineness in the forms and lastly, the three-dimensional effect. Casually, the white pigment or some other pigment of light tone slightly differing from the base is used in the costumes etc. The illustrations displaying this technique are quite distinct from other and austere in appearance.

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A few artists have established their originality by handling the pigments in a different way. The treatment of figures and use of pigments have remained identical, only the method of presentation has varied.

The most illustrious picture in this technique finds its place in the manuscript *Anwar*. The whole scene is subdued in one colour—chrome yellow with a tinge of brown. The human figures, their costumes; animal figure of an ox; tree trunk; hills; water and the distant landscape comprising of buildings, mounds of earth—all have submerged in the background-colour. The details are also represented by employing the deeper shade of the same pigment.

In the objects painted in flat colours the effect of three-dimensions is achieved by introducing shade. The shading of figure is done in two stages. An original colour is spread on the surface first, then darker shades are applied. This can be done either on dry or wet surface. In the first instance the original pigment is allowed to dry up and shading is done through fine, small and close lines or sometimes through dots.

Usually, darker tones of the original colours are found applied for the purpose of shading objects. Shading by different colours of darker hue is also sometimes met with. Shading technique is also found employed in order to create contrast between the objects.

For the choice of colours of natural objects the painters depend for inspiration on nature itself. But in the colouration of designs and decorative motifs he allows himself a greater freedom and tries to bring out the best from his imagination.

Gold dust is an important medium of the Mughal artist. Although gold was not regarded as colour, yet was frequently used in lavish quantities in single paintings in the way that the colours were used.

The Mughal painter does not seem to have made use of geometrical instruments such as compasses or set squares, for nowhere are they shown near the artist at work, circles, especially the haloes in Mughal portraits,

were drawn free hand, with great expertise but for that reason are never perfect circles. Even the vertical and horizontal frame-lines do not meet at exactly 90° in all cases, consequently, the picture seldom represents a true rectangle. Since compasses and squares must have been known and used by masons and carpenters, the painter seems to have deliberately avoided using them largely as an indication of his skill. Indeed, the use of such instruments is discouraged in contemporary model and figure drawing as well.

Same Mughal court painters were skilled at both miniature and wall painting. Abdus Samad, who painted on the palace wall. Daswant, before his admission to the imperial atelier, *"used of his own impulse"* to draw pictures and figure on walls. A miniature of Akbar's time depicts a Muhgal painter executing a wall painting. Here the painter is represented as a rather old man dressed in Mughal Jama and trousers. He is painting human figure surrounded by characteristic Mughal wall motifs.

It is difficult to determine the time a painter took to finish a full page miniature, for obviously, it must have varied from artist to artist and scene to scene. Only in a few miniatures ascribed to the master painter, Khwaja "Abdus" do we come across inscriptions which state that the painter finished these pieces in a day or half a day. The miniature in question are those which the painter completed on *New Year's day* in 1551, 1557 and 1558).

MIR SAIYYID ALI

He learned painting from his father. From the period of his introduction at court, he basked in the ray of royal favour. He made himself famous in his art, and has met with much success.

Painting begun by the Tabrizi artists *Mir Saiyyid Ali* about the year 1550 in Kabul, at the late emperor's orders, was probably unfinished until twenty-five years later, at Agra, under Akbar's reign. Despite the long period, it took to complete the manuscript, and the great political upheavels that

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occured when it was being made, the same style of work was maintained throughout the whole series of 1,375 paintings which form it's illustrative portion. As expected, the style is basically Persian, though there is much in it which depicts an atmosphere and environment different from the production of either Timurid or Safavid schools. One of the leaves is reproduced on and shows the general character of the painting, on the backside of each folio there is a written description of the incident illustrated, the who consisting of the story of the *'Romance of Hamza'*. Hamza was the uncle of Prophet Muhammad, the 'romance' is a fantastic narrative founder on the original adventures of this hero. As records of the life and customs of the early Mughals, the pictures are unique. Unfortunately, in many of the faces have been clumsily obliterated by a later zealot but otherwise they are in an excellent condition. They display quite plainly the circumstances in which they were produced, the general scope of work being devised by *Mir Saiyyid Ali* in his inemitable Safavid style, but in actual painting, he was assisted by others, either Persians or Indians. Apart from any other qualities that it may possess, the *'Amir Hamza'* is of importance in providing that definite connecting link between the Persian and Indian schools.

The illustrations of the *"Amir Hamza"*,[4] however, are a class in themselves; they are too obviously inspired by Persia to be belonging properly to the Mughal School. Its the other manuscripts in the list of illustrated books prepared under Akbar order that we must study for representative specimens of the work of this school. These resolve themselves into groups in the order in which we preserved they were executed.

In the earliest group, we place the two British Museum manuscripts, the *"Darab Nama"* and the *Babar Nama*. The next to be produced were undoubtedly the jaipur *"Razm Nama"* and Bankipur *"Timur Nama"*, which formed the second group. Following these come to the Bodleian Baharistan and Mr Dyson Perrin's Khamsah, forming the third group, while lastly and placed in a class by itself, for reasons which may be explained hereafter is the South Kensingten *Akbar Nama*, the Bankipur Timuri Nama.

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4. Epic Stories in Persian.

A general survey of all the paintings in these manuscripts reveals the fact that as a whole they illustrate a style of work different from that executed at any other period of the Mughal school. The most striking feature is their unmistakably Indian character. While they were indebted in some way to the productions of the Persian, notably for their small size and effect, in every other characteristic they reflect plainly the temperament of the indigenous artist.

Mir Sayyid Ali, the other member of the Safavid school, does not seem to have achieved the high official position of his colleague *Abdus Samad*, eventhough he was probably the better artist. Abu'l Fazl honours him with the first place in his list and allieds to him glowing terms. *"From the time of his introduction at court, the ray of royal favour shone upon him. He has made himself famous in his art, and has met with much success".*[5] But beyond the historians reference to his ability, we know nothing further of the Sayyid's life or his later connection with the Mughal school.

DASWANTH

He was a *palkee-bearer's son. Daswanth* devoted his entire life to the art and used the love of his profession, to draw and paint figures even on walls.

The famous Hindu artist Daswanth who having been handed over to the Khwaja, in a short time surpassed, all painters, and became the first master of the age. Afterwards, his services were deemed so valuable that he was withdrawn from the school, and promoted about the year 1577 to the appointment of *'Master of the Mint'*, which distinguished position he served with great credit for several years. The result of his association with this department may be observed in the high quality of the Mughal coinage of that period, which is not only exceptional for the purity of its metal and fullness of weight, but for a very fine artistic apperance. It's easy to understand how such perfection was accomplished to compose the couplet,

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5. Percy Brown, Indian Painting under the Mughal AD 1550-AD 1750, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1924.

the most skilful *calligrapher* inscribed it, the ablest sculptor modelled it and the best engraver fashioned the dye. And finally it was placed under the finest artist in the state so that the coin would be the most finished artistic production of it's kind. Under such unique conditions, it is not surprising that the work of any other country of that period. This action of the Mughal monarch signifies his attitude generally towards the subject of art, and his application of it to such practical purposes. *Abdus Samad* completed his career being nominated the *Diwan*[6], an honour bestowed upon him in his old age.

Though *Daswanth's* painting are quite many, there is no specimen of his painting, of which he is the sole illustration. In all his designs, some portions of the work, either the drawing or the painting is rendered by other exponents, whose names, including Daswanth's, are written on the margin. The *'Razm Nama'*, is an illuminated adaption of the Hindu epic-Mahabharata and, as it's story contained much that was alien to the Muhammadans, the showed is, with a few exceptions, the work of Hindu artists. Akbar eninced great interest in the ancient Sanskrit literature of India, which was seen in his demand for the preparation of Persian translations of several Hindu classics, among these being, as Abu'l Fazl states, the *'Razmnama'* and the *'Ramayan'*. Several copies of both works with illustrations seem to have been produced at that time, as Akbar in his enthusiasm required some of his nobles order them for use own use.

Daswanth, Basawan and *Lal* were the three experts linked to a majority of the paintings but in each painting they colluded with other artists so that the work at an entity, was worked upon by a large staff. In the two manuscripts which made-up this group, the procedure of employing more than one painter on the same composition is most-prominent, very few of the pictures in other being the work of a singular artist. From the nature of its contents, it appears unreal and fantastic, and a few scenes must have tested severely the ingenuity of the artists in representing them on paper with any degree of success.

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6. Revenue Commissioner of Multan.

At least four of Akbar's artists belonged to the Akbar or *palanquin bearer* caste, including the famous Daswanth. However, *Daswanth* rose superior to his humble birth and by sheer genius came to be regarded as the ablest painter of his time. His artistic gift displayed itself early in life, and his effects to find expression he used to draw and paint figures even on walls'. By accident his natural ability was first revealed to the emperor himself, *"for one day the eye of His Majesty fell on him; his talent was discovered and he was handed over to Abdus Samad for training. In a short span of time, he surpassed all other painters and became 'the first master of the age"*.[7] Sadly, he suffered from fits of depression and finally he lost his mental balance. One day, he stabbed himself with a dagger and died two days later. This tragic incident apparently occured in 1584, although he had hardly reached his middle age, yet he left many masterpieces. It is unfortunate that no works done singularly by him have survived, but there are numerous in which he has collaborated with others. In the Jaipur *Razm Nama* at least twenty-four pictures carry his name, and there is one at the Bankipur *Timur Nama* in which he joined hands with *Jag Jivan*, but none of these are a convincing example of his genius. Daswanth's caste-fellows excelled themselves in their art, as the Kesus, both father and son, are both talked about in the *Ain*, while *Paras* and *Ibrahim* also did good work: their paintings can be seen in the *Babur Nama* and *Darab Nama* in the British Museum and in the Bankipur Timurnama. An artist who competed with Daswanth was another Hindu painter, *Basawan*.

ABU'L FAZL

Its against this interest in historical documentation that we see Abu'l Fazl entry on this stage, and specially his role as a historian. Born in 1551 as the second son of *Shaikh Mubarak*, he is reported to be gifted with an extraordinary memory. The intellectual environment of his father's house certainly conditioned him to be inquisitive about all matters, and by the time he attained the year of 15 years he had mastered the subjects known

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7. Rare Painter.

as *'Manqul'*, by twenty he confesses to have become bored with the limitation of Islam, and he yearned for the esoteric knowledge of this period, he appears to recognize the need to develop a wider vision.

"By the machinations of my extraordinary soul, the picture of ambition had been erased from the porch of much mind and longing for asceticism exhibited and foot, breaking to pieces the enclosing wall of my environment, and taking the path of liberation".

THE IMPORTANCE OF ILLUSTRATIONS:

In particular cases the chronicle in such a way as though he was providing visual notes for the artists. The author concentrates on the imagery in creating a *'Pictorial Environment'* rather than on narration, the causes for certain happenings. In the battle waged between the two groups of sanyasis at Thanesar, he reports each detail on the field of massacre, beginning with words that could be taken as being addressed to the artist.

All the details of this incident are depicted by the master *Basawan* in one of the most outstanding double compositions in the manuscript. Travelling from the imperial encampment, the ritual bathing of pilgrims in the tank, to the alms giving, the banyan tree and ghat under dispute, the picture gradually develops till the blowing of conch shells as the yogis prepare for battle.

In many likewise manuscripts, for example in the superb painting on the *'Punishment of Adham Khan'*, the close correspondence between the narrative text and the illumination can only be explained by the fact that the artist had access to the text or that passage had been narrated to the artist. Simultaneously, the painting has an extraordinary power and immediately that gives it undeniable advantage over the text, summarising four or five passages of prose and introducing the locale and *'Dramatis Personae'* of the tragedy in one comprehensive statement. The superb treatment of the subject by *Miskin* was immediately recognized, since the

painting served as the model for a drawing rendered atleast fifteen years later, and now safeguarded in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin.

The importance which *Abu'l Fazl* attributed to the painting, and his admiration of the royal atelier is attested in the tribute he pays them in chapter 34 of the *'Ain-i-Akbari'*.[8] It will be seen later in this volume that there is a noteworhty concidence between the names of the master artists written in the *Ain* and those assigned the major share of work in the *'Akbar Nama paintings'*.[9] The masters recommended by Abu'l Fazl in the *Ain-i-Akbari* have rendered four-fifths of the work in the royal manuscript since Abu'l Fazl has authored the *'Akbar Nama and the Ain-i-Akbari'*. It appears that he preferred the work of these masters and so employed their talents for the illumination of his chronicle.

Finally, our further point would help establish this hypothesis. From Abu'l Fazl's own statements it seems that this chronicle was scrutinized and encouraged daily by the Emperor and when Abu'l Fazl finishes writing the history of thirty years of Akbar's life and first seventeen years of the reign, he finishes a date to this first volume of the *Akbar Nama*.

AQA RIZA

Jahangir referred very briefly to *Aqa Riza*, during his confabulation of Abul Hasan in the *'Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri'*.[10] *"His (Abul Hasan's) father, 'Aqa Riza of Herat' (or Meev) at the time when I was a prince, joined my service. There is, however, no comparison between his work and that of his father".*

"The statement is more in praise of Abul Hasan than purposely derogatory to Aqa Fiza, but it establishes the elder man as an important personality, whatever our view of the visual rewards of his work". He carried to India direct knowledge of the latest Iranian artistic styles; he served as a painter for Prince Salim and is thus is important to an analysis of Salim's taste and patronage before the imperial workshops came under his control. Of course, he was enormously influential as the father and assumedly the early teacher of

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8. Institutes of Akbar.
9. Historical Events of Akbar's Period.
10. Memoirs of Jahangir.

Abul Hasan, as various inscriptions inform us of Abid.

It is known to us that *Aqa Riza* was in india by the time of Abul Hasan's birth in 1588-89, and his earliest known works are probably two pages in the *Muraqqe-i-Gulshan* which are almost purely Iranian. The shows us that Aqa Riza was a professionally trained *Safavid* painter at the time of his arrival at the Mughal court, and it's informative to observe as to what influence the Mughal court bore on his style.

Jahangir's memoirs state that he came from Herat or Merv, but inscriptions on two illustration term Abul Hasan as *'Al-Mashhadi'*. Since one of these inscriptions is by Abul Hasan himself, and the other by Abid, the Messhed link to the family is undoubtable. And truely, the legendary *Haft Aurang* of Jami manuscript, made at Messhed between 1556 and 1565, is a perfect stylistic source of *Muraqqe-i-Gulshan* by Aqa Riza.

We do not have any concrete information on the painter's activities before his appearance in India. We do not know why he left Iran.

Aqa Riza's Iranian origins are also obvious' in the *'Portrait of a Courtier'*, as the pose, details such as the bench and the langorous mood have been captured in numerous Safavid paintings. What defines the work as Mughal is the degree of modelling in the face, and of course the inscription. The latter refers to Aqa Riza as *'murid'*[11] a term seen in inscriptions by both Aqa Riza and the young Abul Hasan and used by Mughal courtiers to signify their subservience to the *emperor's wisdom*. Above the name Sultan Salim has been inscribed in gold, so there can be no doubt as to whom the painter is paying homage.

That Salim has been titled *'Sultan'* allows us to the date the illustration before 1599-600, at which time the rebellions prince titled himself *'Shah'*.

The major paintings by Aqa Riza are in the *'Anwar-i-Suhaili'*[12] manuscript, British Library which bears an inscription stating that it was finished in 1610. Two of Aqa Riza's are independently inscribed with the date 1604.

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11. Disciple.
12. Light of Canopies.

The book, which had therefore commenced for Jahangir prior to his accession to the throne, has two kinds of illustrations, works of a very Iranian character by *Aqa Riza* and *painters under his influence*[13] and paintings with the typical characteristics by *Bishan Das, Anant, Nanha* etc. The first group is distinguished by flamboyant mineral colours, frequent use of gold, carefully orchestrated surface patterns, general spatial flatness, and a detailed, miniaturistic technique, the others tend to show soft earth colours and looser brushwork which were traits current in imperial Mughal works.

The same stylistic range is adopted in other manuscripts made at the same time and this emphasizes Aqa Riza's distance from the mainstream Mughal tradition. It may have been this inability to adapt, and more so the quality of individual paintings, that made Jahangir comment on the painter's work.

The margins of a leaf in one of Jahangir's albums show this phase of Aqa Riza's style for despite being unsigned, the figures are identical to those in the *Anwar-i-Suhaili.* It has a superbly decorative border and depict incident that occurred during a hunt. Individual faces are defined and modelling far smoothly as compared to the *'Portrait of a courtier'* and the overall action has an immediacy that was absent in Aqa Riza's former works. This development happened due to his increasing contact with Mughal attitudes and through his study of European prints of the *Muraqqe-i-Gulshan* for instance signed by Aqa Riza uses European motifs in the margins.

However, inspite of the superficial *'Mughalisation'* of the painters' work, the figures lack individuality and dynamism. A comparison with the marginal figures by *Goverdhan* makes clear the degree which Aqa Riza was unable to go beyond traditional attitudes towards the human form. This no judgement on the painting, it's simply that the meaning of the figures are not with contemporary Mughal imperial ideas.

The Persian orientation of Aqa Riza's style was an important feature in the development of Prince Salim's taste. It may been found on the imperial

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13. Abul Hasan and Mirza Ghulam.

manuscript of the mid 1590's as well as on the earliest Jahangir album paintings were because of ideas introduced by Aqa Riza, however, his special influence does not seem to exist in about 1605, and it appears that his style went out-of-date. Once Jahangir commanded the full imperial workshops. One understands that Aqa Riza's work was not restricted simply to painting is shown by his reported responsibility for the design of *Khusran Bagh,* the garden at Allahabad in which Salim's wife, Shah Begum was buried in 1604.

ABDUS SAMAD

Abdus Samad was one of the band of prominent Iranian painters that either accompanied or followed Humayun to India after his visit to Tabriz in 1544 and whose activity and prestige were important elements in enduring the Mughal style. Reference in the *Akbarnama* gives us a pieces of his career of the year 1544, for example, when Humayun was in exile and sought help from the Iranian Shah Tahmasp, Abu'l Fazl wrote:-

"His Majesty Humayun first proceeded to view Tabriz when he came near it the governors and the grandees came out to welcome him. The quisite and magical Khawaja Abdus Samad shirin qualam[14] also entered into service in this city and was much esteemed by that connoisseur of excellence. But from the hindrances of fate he could not accompany him".

Humayun finally established an interim capital at Kabul where in 1550, *Abdus Samad* and *Mir Sayyid Ali* who were celebrated for their skill in painting came and were graciously welcomed. In 1556, Humayun returned to Delhi with the young Akbar. The master-artists-*Mir Saiyyid Ali* and *Khawaja Abdus Samad* who were among the matchless ones of this art were in his service and guiding him.

The *Hamza Nama* manuscript was started about 1562 and *Abdus Samad* was the supervisor of the project in 1577, the year of it's probable completion.

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14. Sweet Pen.

Abdus was appointed director of the imperial mint at the capital, Fatehpur Sikri and in 1582, he was appointed an overseer. *Abdus Samad* was a man of considerable administrative talent, his paintings during these years were few and highly conservative or so it would appear from the remaining works known to us.

Abdus Samad was a conservative. This is clear from the remaining works known to us. *'Jamshid writing on a Rock'*, for instance, shows none of the interest in liveliness of colour, originality of composition or European techniques of modelling and perspective that were an integral part of the art of Mughal painting by the 1580s. His compositions are flat and decorative, excellently composed and filled with flawlessly executed minute details, the human figures are relatively expressionless, carefully framed and offset by landscape elements. He happens to use densely packed mountain forms of a dark tonality. *Abdus Samad* acted as a continuous model of technical skill and control.

It is the combination of pure energy found in painters as or in the *Hamza Nama* manuscript and the control and technical refinements of Abdus Samad that produced the great manuscript illustration of the 1590's.

Additional works with inscriptions of *Abdus Samad* during his years in India.

i. *Two young men in a garden* from the Murqqa Gulshan, dated 1551, former Imperial Library, Teheran.

ii. *Akbar presented a painting to Humayun* from the Murqqa Gulshan, former Imperial Library, Teheran.

iii. *A horse and groom* from the Murqqa Gulshan, former Imperial Library, Teheran.

iv. *The arrest of Shah Abu'l Haali*, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

v. *Darab Nama*, circa 1580. British Library, London.

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vi. *Razm Nama*, circa 1582-86. City Palace Museum, Jaipur.

vii.*Hunting Scene*, from an album of Jahangir, Los Angeles Country Museum of art.

BISHAN DAS

Bishan Das's career divides itself into two parts. In 1613, he was chosen to a company the embassy of Khan Alam to the court of the Safavid *Shah Abbas* at Ishfahan, Jahangir, anxious to impress upon his Iranian rival of the wealth and power of the Mughals, arranged for the mission to be extremely grand and its success, in this context is linked in a contemporary Iranian account.

The powerful king *Salim Shah*, ruler of Hindustan, sent *Mirza Barkhurdar*, titled *'Khan Alam'*, who is a great noble of the court and is styled *'bhai'* or brother by the Shah, an ambassador... The day Khan Alam entered Qazvin, the writer was present in the city and himself was witness to the grandeur of the ambassador's train. He also made enquiries of old men, who had beheld other embassies in the days of old, and all agreed that from the beginning of this divine dynasty, no ambassador even came from India or Rome with such splended and lavish equipments.

He had with him 1000 royal servants, his own private servants, few falcons and hunters. He also had mighty elephants with golden ornaments, turrets of innumerable birds and Indian singing birds and beautiful palkis.

Khan Alam remained until 1620 AD, and upon his return was greatly honoured. Jahangir writes about this event in a passage which interests us.

"At that time I sent Khan Alam to Persia, I had sent with him a painter of the name Bishan Das, who was unequalled at his age for taking likeness to take the portraits of the Shah and the chief men of his state; and bring them. He had drawn the likeness of the Shah and the chief men of his state and bring them and

had specially taken that of my brother, the Shah exceedingly well, so that when I showed it to any of his servants, they said it was exceedingly well drawn.[15]

The emperor further notes of the events of the embassy's return the Bishan Das, the painter was gifted an elephant. What is of importance, is to note that Bishan Das was absent from India during the middle artistically rich years of Jahangir's reign. A famed group of pictures, attached traditionally and by inscription to *Bishan Das,* relates to this trip, for it consists of paintings of the meeting of *Khan Alam* and *Shah Abbas'* and also portraits of the Shah and members of his family. One such painting from the late Shah Jahan album, has been included here. His earliest known commissions had two imperial manuscripts of the 1590's, among others, and by the first decade of the seventeenth century he had achieved enough prominence to be included amongst the portraits of painters to be found in the margins of the Gulshan Album. There is only one painting that can offer explanation of the basis for this reputation at such an early date, however. This is *'The House of Sheikh Phul'* a signed that in softness of colour, simplicity of composition and intensity, relates to other paintings of about 1605. Along with his relatively modest contribution to the 1604-1610 *'Anwar-i-Suhaili',* this is the fundamentals for understanding Bishan Das's style, because there are few other major signed works. His style is quite recognizable and consistent, however, to assure confidence in further attributions.

Such an attributed page from the Jahangir-Nama showing, *'The Birth of Jahangir'* is seen here. The painter uses a spectrum of dark earth colours, and draws with a free and apparently *unselfconscious line* that imparts warmth and animation to his figures. The variety of personalities he depicts is extraordinary, confirming Jahangir's praise of his portraits. This is specially notable among the harem women in the top half, for stock formulas were more customary, when showing groups of female figures. Court ladies lived in rigid *purdah*[16] and were seen only by immediate family members, thus there was scarce opportunity for true portraiture, compare the treatment of women here and by an anonymous artist for instance. Bishan Das also paid

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15. M.C. Beach, Imperial Image Painting, for the Mughal Court Freer Gallery of Art, 1981. M.C. Beach, Grand Mughal Imperial Painting in India (1660-1660). Contributions by Stuart (Art Welch and Gemn D, Lowery Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, William Stonnes, Massachusetts Asia House, New York, April 19, June 1979.

16. Seclusion.

less attention to the use of space generally or shading to impart physical bulk to his forms, than *Abul Hasan*, for example or Goverdhan. It's characterization and gesture, not modelling, that makes his figures life-like. The painters works specially, his later illustrations are sometimes even spatially unbalanced, as can be viewed in another *Jahangir-Nama* leaf, a processional scenes which exhibits *Bishan Das's* characteristic colour, brush-work, and character types. Here, his learnings towards grouping figures together is more pronounced, and the line works is harder. The extreme contrasts in the proportion of both these miniatures should be studied together.

Miniature No. 20 (B 20), *"Prince with Scholars"*, inscription *Amai-i-Lal*[17] (work of Lal), Miniature No.4a (b. 20), *"Poetry recital and female musicians"*, inscription Ustad Lal (master Painter Lal).

Tall cypresses, plants with branches laden with flowers, a small tank in the foreground, with ducks swimming in it, ground *"sprigged with small plants"*[18] are features shared in these two compositions. The central figures in both is painted in identical pose and presumably are of the same individual. Here, the motifs employed to Lal's proximity to Persian art.

These miniature are also important for the study of the costumes of the female musicians and their instruments; as also for the costumes of men of different strata. The fountain with four spouts will be interesting to study under the water-works' in the 16th century.

KESU

Kesu Das was one of the greatest of Akbar's artist and is placed just below Basawan in the list of painters given by Abu'l Fazl in the *Ain-i-Akbari*. He is best known for his copies and adaptations of European prints and this interest influenced his work in the major Akbari manuscripts in the *Darab-Nama*. For instance, in a scene identified by Norah Titley as the water maiden's husband tearing their children's bodies apart in which a frontal

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17. Work of Lal.
18. In typical Persian style.

male wide is modelled in such a way, that the figure has a weight and mass unsurpassable by other works of the period, the *Razm Nama* project.

At the time of *Razm Nama, Kesu* was already established as a prominent artist. He worked singularly on three illustrations and designed four others *'three of which were completed by the young Miskin'*. He also executed a design by Daswanth, Akbar's greatest painters while hardly rival in quality, the thirty-eight illustrations designed by Lal for the manuscript. His talent was clearly appreciated in the Jaipur Ramayana which followed immediately. The *Razm Nama* project, Kesu's assignments were increased, and by the time the first Akbarnama commenced, he was the third most important designer. Only two illustrations in Tehran section of his *Jamial-Tawarikh,* as an innovative adaptor of European ideas are recent article on his career and on European influence, especially, discussion. *Kesu* is a brilliant technician.

The manuscripts with inscriptions to Kesu are:-

i. *Darab Nama,* circa 1580, British Library, London, Beach, Mughal Painter-Kesu Das, fig. 15.

ii. *Razm Nama,* circa 1582-86, City Palace Museum, Jaipur, Beach, Mughal painter-Kesu Das fig. 16.

iii. *Ramayana,* circa 1584-89, City Palace Museum, Jaipur.

iv. *Akbar Nama,* circa 1590 or earlier, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, P.B.M., 1976, No. 44.

v. Diwan of Shahi, circa 1595, Private Collection, Mughal Painter Kesu Das.

Miniature 11 a (b. 20), *"Two ascetics in the wilderness"*. Inscription, listed Basawan *(Master Painter Basawan).*

The human figures in this miniature are half naked and shown shivering in the cold through a real-life depiction of postures. An old tree bare of

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leaves in the background and an empty bowl with a dog standing nearby lay importance on the grimness of the scene. The delicate handling of the thin shading is typical of the Indian technique of painting. Two playful monkeys on the tree lend a little lightness to the otherwise grave surroundings.

Akbar Hunts Wild Asses in the Desert

The prince of theosophists progresses towards his objective...the scouts report that there was a herd of wild asses. Akbar proceeded to hunt them, assisted by three or four special huntsmen. As he reared their location, he dismounted and advanced on foot. First, he shot a wild asss, as it hit him but the rest of the herd ran away on hearing the gun's report. The king took his gun in his hand and progressed swiftly on foot, on the burning sands, attended by the same three or four huntsmen. He continued to follow them and on the very first day he shot thirteen wild asses. Whenever he culled one, the other fled further than the first. During this time, he felt very thirsty. There was no water around, a strange conditioned occurred, his weakness due to thirst was so much that he became incapable of talking. This was when mystic guides leading special water bearers came to be seen in the endless desert. Thanks giving was offered to god. It seems that divine power had interacted and impressed upon his Majesty the importance of his own holy person and that he should safeguard it and it was he in fact who was looking after mankind at large...

Context: It is indicated in the Akbarnama that Akbar had spiritual seizers on quite a few occasions. From among the innumerable anecdotes of hunts, it appears strange that this very incident should be selected for illumination. It seems to be a well thought-about choice to depict the emperor in a mood of inner-retrospection. In complete variance with the above passage, the contemporary description of this episode by Nizamuddin Ahmed is factual and gives no indication of the 'strange condition' that supervened.

In it Akbar seems to be superhuman in his vitality and is similar to the way in which he is shown in an earlier illustration from the Timur Nama. A comparative

analysis of the two pictures is enlightening, and endorses the new attitude adopted in the Akbarnama.

Description: The exact moment is captured when the water carriers brust upon the scene, to see their king sitting alone and withdrawn in the clearing. Beyond him, he the wild asses, blood spurting from the bullet wounds. Akbar is still, his eyes closed as though in a sominabulistic trance. Instead of depicting him as a hero, the delicate rendering by Kesu shows him all alone and dazed by the experience. The strange glow on the attendant's faces and their fluttering gestures seem to indicate that they are viewing something unique.

Comparison: The sense of mystery which surrounds these figures, is related to another painting of this series. One single page in the India Office Library depicts Akbar again seated in a trance, in a clearing under a shady tree. Above him in a blue mist appear, the gazelles, nilgais and black bucks killed by Akbar in shikar, when he abruptly brought a stop to the activities and offered thanks to God.

The noteworthy similarity between the two compositions could not be incidental. Both subjects present the spiritual facet of Akbar's personality, in search of the mystical.[19]

BASAWAN

Basawan is named in the *Ain-i-Akbari* as the greatest of Akbar's painters after *Mir Sayyid Ali, Abdus Samad, and Daswanth. Basawan*, thus, was the most prominent, prestigious and influential painter active during the later years of Akbar's reign. The list of his work given below is practically the entire list of major Akbari manuscripts for illustrations that were collaboration, his assignments were as outliner/designer as befitting his status.

Two other artists were usually given more pages as a consequence of Basawan's slow and painstaking technique. Basawan studied and learnt a lot from the European prints available in the Mughal empire and as a results his figures are defined by weight and mass and his character

19. Geeti Sen, Painting from the Akbarnama by Roopa Company, Pataudi House.

studies are imparalleled. *Basawan's* achievement was critical to the development of Jahangir portraiture in the early seventeenth century, an astonishing achievement since he was instrumental in the formation of the quite different early Mughal style.

There are also significant evidences for the availability of European works as models well before the arrival of the first Jesuit mission in 1580.

The progress of *Basawan's* style shows a continually developing understanding and adaptation of European principles, unlike a painter like Kesu Das. In Kesu Das's work, we sense a barrier to complete comprehension, for while he handled immentively space and modelling, he was an indifferent portraitist, his figures rarely transcending general types. *Basawan* invariably used very subdued colours whereas *Kesu, Mahesh or Hasan* preferred bright, flat tones that tended to reinforce surface rather than spatial values.

The *Tuti Nama, Hamza-Darab Nama,* pages are the best and most comparable instances for comprehending the progression of *Basawan's* early development. By the 1580, he was a completely mature painter and his later works were essentially refinements of the *Darab Nama* style.

Manuscripts with inscription to Basawan's:-

i. *Tuti Nama,* circa 1560, Cleveland Museum of Art, Re-Pramod Chandra, Tutinama, pp. 77-78.

ii. *Darab Nama,* circa 1580, British Library, London, p. Welch, Painting of Basawan.

iii. *Razm Nama,* circa 1582.

iv. *Timur Nama,* circa 1584.

v. *Ramayan,* circa 1584-88.

vi. *Babur Nama,* circa 1589.

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vii. *Akbar Nama*, circa 1596 earlier, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

viii. *Anwar-i-Suhaili*, dated 1596-97, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras.

ix. *Hamza Nama*, circa 1562-77, Museum for Angewandte Kust, Vienna.

Akbar Slays a Tigress which Attacked the Royal Cavalcade

The royal calvalcade progressed towards the centre of sovereignty. Akbar proceeded rapidly hunting and shooting on the way to the fort of Narwar. Suddenly, a fierce tiger with five cubs came out and marched on the cavalcade's track. Akbar faced the fiery animal. As the spectators observed the two opponents, paralyzed by fear, the king swiftly culled it with a single stroke of his word.

Context: The chronicle introduces this topic as 'the first beast of prey' which was personally attacked by Akbar, which is enough reason for this superlatively depicted encounter. But some revision of the text of the Akbarnama contracted each other using the term babari, but the text written on the illuminated page identify the animal the beast as a tigress.

Description: The description of the event is very clear and hints that it has been sourced from an eye-witness report. The terrain hints that the imperial the imperial procession is moving through the hilly forests of Malwa state. In the middle, of the green clearing Akbar leaps into the air on his mount and with one long, clean stroke of his sword severs her head from the body. The picture shows her tongue hanging out and blood spurting. The fierce vibrations of this encounter feeble issue of rippling muscles and energy.

On the left-half page one sees the cubs lying dead, a grievously injured man while a third is being stabbed with a dagger. Movement coils and recoils with the streamlined, tense bodies of the cubs and the hunters exude the energy and tension which originated. On the right-hand page again one can experience the fear that held the spectators in thrall.

Artists: Amongst the pictures of the Akbar Nama, this double page is the first made by Basawan and is a spectacular entry. In total, eleven paintings are inscribed

to him in this manuscript as well as three other illustrations where he retouched the faces. In three of them there are depictions of violent encounters and contests which he seemed to have deliberately chosen. Savagery is depicted with speed, elegance and precision which makes the experience sublime.

Akbar's Adventures with the Elephant Hawai

The elephant Hawai was a very strong animal who held his own among the special elephants. Strong and experienced drivers who had spent a large part of their lives in riding similar elephants rode him with difficulty... Akbar... one day mounted this elephant who was at his ferocious best on the polo-ground which he had built outside the fort of Agra for his pleasure and manoeuvred the animal with flourish. Subsequently, he pitted him against the elephant Ran Bagha who equalled Hawai in nearly all respect. The loyal and experienced people who were present there were flabbergasted. When the disturbed Ataga Khan arrived and saw the happenings, he was horrified and lamented like an oppressed suppliant for justice. Great and small prayed for Akbar's safety. Akbar carried on his pursuit until the elephant Hawai was victorious. Ran Bagha fled with Hawai in close and single-minded pursuit. After running a great distance, the elephants arrived at the banks of the river Jamna and ran across the pantoon bridge which were alternately submerged and lifted up under their combined weights. The royal servants Swam till the elephants reached the other bank of the river.

Context: This exhilerating adventure was remembered many years hence in Jahangir's memoirs where he relates the story as though 'from the honoured ups of my revered father'. Later Akbar appear to have confessed to his biographer that when he took such great risks, he was tempting God and his destiny. Such acts of abandon when he was young, were to his nature, but it left the courtiers panic-stricken.

For this illustration, it is quite possible that Abu'l Fazl had decided to have the passage illustrated, and that the master artist Basawan was read the text before he commenced his work.

Description: Three pages of text have been effectively composed into a double-leaf illustration. The elephants thunder across the pantoon bridge as the beats capsize

under their bulk. Cries of horror seem to follow Akbar who sits confidently with his bare foot firmly tucked into the ropes around the elephant. On the facing page Ataga Khan stands with his silent prayer and with him a sea of hand 'great and small' are raised in an earnest request.

Artist: Basawan has surpassed himself in this superlative portrayal of the elephants. His is given special commendation in the Ain, among the masters of Akbar's studio, for foreshortening and for 'painting illusionistically'. These qualities are depicted here, in the dramatic figure with loosened turban who seems after the marauding elephants, endangering his very life details like the modelling of the rough wooden roll posts at the water's edge, tied loosely together with rope indicate his been observation and expertise in textures. In the background are the Agra fort walls, animated by details such as a flock of sheep near the water's edge.[20]

MISKIN

Miskin who had rendered the maximum miniatures appears to have achieved perfection in animal drawing. Animal figures represented in dynamic and violent rythm ascribed to *Miskin* are seldom seen in any other miniature of the sixteenth century Mughal School. Here he has surpassed *Basawan* who has sketched elephants crossing a bridge. A hunting scene drawn by *Miskin* represents animals in a variety of postures and actions, here Miskin has coloured the sketch. The latter attained great perfection in bird, animal and floral painting and became an unrivalled painter of his age during Jahangir's reign.

Animals figures sketched by *Farrukh Chela* are represented in the painter's individual style while their shape seems to be suttering and attenuated. This tendency has survived from the very beginning of his works viz. on folio 116 of the *'Diwan-i-Hafiz'*[21] folio 30 of the *'Anwar-i-Suhaili'*[22].

Battle between two Rival Groups of Sanyasis at Thanesar

While Akbar was camping at Thanesar, a fight arose among the sanyasis which

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20. Geeti Sen, Painting from the Akbarnama by Roopa Company, Pataudi House.
21. Poetic Compositions by Hafiz (Rampur).
22. Persian Knight Stories (Varanasi).

ended in battle. The details are: near that town, there is a water tank which can be termed as a mini-sea. Initially, there lay a wide plain known as the Kurukhet which Indian sages have revered since time immemorial. Hindus from various parts of India visited it at auspicious times and gave alms, and there is great concourse. In this year, before Akbar's arrival, a great crowd collected. There were two parties among the sanyasis, one was called Kur and the other Puri. A quarrel took place among these two groups about the place of sitting....The reason for the dispute was that the Puri sect had a definite place on the banks where they sat and begged. The pilgrims would give them alms after taking the customary purifying dip in the river. On that day, the Kur faction had forced their way to the place of the Puris who were unable to keep their original place.

Their leader Kesu Puri arrrived at Ambala and did homage and made a claim for justice, indicating the Kurs for having fraudulently taken their place. As both the parties were disturbed and desired to end the dispute, they got permission to fight it out. It happened so that on that very day both the party were numerous. The two sides filed up in a line and the first man one each side dwelled with swords. Later, bows and arrows were used. After that, the Puris hurled stones at the Kurs. The imperial troops also joined forces with the Puris and such was the onslaught of the two that the Kurs retreated. The Puris persued them and killed numerous Kurs. They also slow the Kur pir and head called Anant Kur. The rest of the Kurs fled. Akbar was delighted with this sport and marched from Thanesar the very next day.

Context: This strange event, what happened in the nineteenth reignal year is reported in all important sources of Akbar's reign. By naming the two sects Puris and Kurs, Abu'l Fazl may possibly be referring to the Pandavas and Kauravas in the epic battle of Mahabharata. A detailed study of the paintings might indicate that he is taking about the major division between the Sainite and Vaishnavaite sects. The paintings are very interesting record of different religious orders which existed in the sixteenth century.

Description: The double page starts on the left with courtiers watching the bathing pilgrims from the royal encampment. This scene can be beheld even today, with one

pigrim reciting a mantra, another holding a japmala or beads to recite prayers, and a third distributing alms. On the stone embankments of the disputed area, there is a banyan tree around which can be seen bundles, book and the water jars of the ascetics.

The delegation to the emperor on the right page is led by Kesu Puri, who not only wears Kushnas name but wear the Vaishnava 'tilak' and a crown of peacock feathers on his head. The lower part of the composition depicts the savage combat between the two sects. The most influencing moment of this drama is shown in the troops pouncing with range upon Anant Kur, is slashed across the shoulder and swoons among his supporters. Wild hair, unkempt, contorted expressions of agony and horror seen on the faces, ashen grey bodies being revered into pieces are the final comments on the Kurs as they are chased out of the painting.

Artists: This tragedy is treated in two superb spreads by the master artist Basawan, who is known in several single drawings to have depicted medicants and fakirs.

Comparison: This episode had been chosen in the few illustrations of Akbar's life in the illuminated manuscript. Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuriya. Here, a single page shows the groups of pilgrims in the water tank, the yogis by the waterside battle. The painting is by Miskin, painting a few years earlier than Basawan's double page. It, therefore, provided a comparitive study for the work of the two masters.

MANSUR

Mansur's known career commenced in the late 1580's when he was assigned the painting showed here. His designer and *collaborator* (and immediate superior) was *Kanha*, who with *Miskin* must have been considered the major animal painters of the time. At about the same time, *Mansur* worked on two pages of the *Akbar Nama*.[23]

The first was an elaborate hunting scene designed by *Basawan* the greatest figural painter of the period. *Mansur* was being trained by the major talent

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23. Histocial Events of Akbar's Period.

in the workshops. In about 1591, he was given the singular responsibility for five animal studies in the Bulich Library. *Babur Nama*, an obvious recognition of his quickly established expertise with animal subjects.

His works as a portraitist or a painter of figural composition was indifferent, as attested by his leaves in the second *Akbar Nama*. The fundamental features of the design—the simple background, with a few typical plants distributed in a way that systematically envlivenced the surface, or the usage of plain, uncoloured paper to concentrate attention on the animal are presumably elements contributed here by *Kanha* but they carry on the *Mansur's* later natural history works as well. The slow, careful drawing and sparingly applied paint, however appears specially distinctive to *Mansur*. Akbar-period manuscript with inscription to *Mansur*.

Out of hundreds of painters who have employed at the Mughal atelier, only a few are known for specialisation in one or the other aspects of painting. Amongst them, *Abu Hasan, Bichitr, Bishan Das, Goverdhan, Manohar, Mansur* and *Payag* were famed. Mansur seems to have specialised in drawing bird and animal figures as well as flowers. This became famous for his specialisation in rendering bird and animal figures; and also flowers in the 16th-17th century India. Jahangir wrote in 1618, *"Mansur had become such a master in painting that he has the title of Nadirul-Asr and in the art of drawing is unique in his generation. In the time of my father's reign and my own these two have no third"*. However, the exact date when Mansur was conferred his title i.e. *"Naduril-Asr"*, is not clear from Jahangir's memoirs.

Most presumably, *Mansur* got his title around 1612 when he rendered the turkey-cock which has been described in the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangir*.[24] This painting bears an inscription *'amal-i-banda-idargan Mansur Nadirul-Asr, Jahangirshahi'*.[25]

No knowledge of Mansur's life is traceable. That maybe he was from a family of *'designer'*[26] or *'engraver'* as may be detected from some inscriptions, that is *'Mansur Naqqash'*.[27] We also know that Mansur did illumination

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24. Memoirs of Jahangir (account of the year 1912).
25. Work of the servant of court of Emperor Jahangir.
26. Ornamental Artist.
27. Artist Mansur as the engraver.

work—a rare specimen of which is in Khamsa contemporary to his earlier work in *Babur Nama.*

Mansur appears to have become attached to the Mughal atelier after 1595. Numerous manuscripts illuminated earlier to this date—*Razm Nama*[28], *Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuria*[29], *Darab Nama*[30] etc. do not contain miniatures ascribed to him. Maybe, the earliest specimens of his works are the illustrations executed by him in the copies of *Babur Nama;*[31] *Jami-ut-Tawarikh*[32], and *Akbar Nama.*[33] *'Antelopes'* and *'Water-Buffaloes',*[34] illustrations from a dispersed copy of the *Babur Nama* may be taken as one of the earliest examples of his art. On these folios, *Mansur* was a co-artist, and has only coloured the illustrations. The sketching has been done by *Kanha*-a leading painter of Akbar's court. It may be emphasized that the painters, while in the learning stage, worked in general, first as a co-artist, and only laid pigments in the sketchings rendered by master-painters. But this was not a rule.

Mansur, whose active period as a painter may be stipulated as after 1597-8 has not been referred to in the *Ain-i-Akbari* by Abu'l Fazl because he rose to the status of a *'master'*[35] painter only by the end of Akbar's reign, 1600-5, by which time the *Ain* has already been completed. The fact that *Mansur* had achieved perfection in a short span of time is obvious from the inscription given with an epithet *'ustad'.* The term 'ustad' was not a title bestowed by the Mughal sovereigns. It was a customary epithet employed by the disciples of an artist or his colleagues which itself testifies to *Mansur's* greatness. Other contemporary painters who were considered master of their art were *'ustad Husain'* and *'ustad Miskin'. Mansur* came across as a co-artist in the illuminated manuscripts of *Jami-ut-Tawarikh* and *Akbar Nama* where he only filled in the pigments, while sketches were done by *Nanha, Miskin* and *Basawan.* Miniatures on the folios of *Babur Nama* are his independent studies. The manuscripts has five folios depicting bird and animal drawings ascribed to *'Mansur Naqqash'.* These pictures are evidence of the distinguished quality of the painter, depiction

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28. State Museum, Jaipur.
29. Oriental Public Library, Rampur.
30. British Museum.
31. National Museum.
32. Imperial Library, Teheran.
33. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
34. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington.
35. Teacher.

of details, true-to-life representation, truthful depiction of colours etc. Bird and animal drawings rendered by other sixteenth century Mughal painters— *Dhanraj, Shivraj, Jagannath, Makra, Shyam, Surya Gujaral,* in the same manuscripts looking inferior from this point of view.

Jahangir, who was supremely enchanted by rare birds and animals, insisted on maintaining pictorial records of them, apart from giving descriptive notes on their behaviour, life and other details in his memoirs. The ones of portraying items appears to have been on *Mansur.* We come across at least two such instances in Jahangir's memoirs when Jahangir commissioned *Mansur* to paint the likeness of some birds gifted to the Emperor or observed by him in nature. In 1619, Jahangir commanded *Mansur* to draw a falcon, presented to him by the Persian king. In the succeeding year, while on visit to Kashmir, he asked *Mansur* to under the bird dipper. Numerous other bird and animals described in detail by Jahangir in his memoirs, were drawn by *Mansur* presumably on the Emperor's orders, namely turkey-cock, pheasant, zebra. This indicates that *Mansur* had attained a distinct and unrivalled position among the court-painters for animal portrayals. It may be mentioned here that other painters-*Abu Hasan, Farrukh Beg, Inayat, Manohar, Miskin, Murad and Pidarath* also rendered animal life-but in a casual manner. *Mansur's* contribution to the treasure-trove of the portraits of birds and animals in distinct itself and unsurpassed. Apart from the large number of such drawings, his work is distinguished by its truthful represenation, depiction of minute details realism and accuracy in form and naturalistic distribution of pigments.

Mansur's paintings drawn from life are the best examples of realism in the history of art in India. This novel attempt at realism affected the earlier oriental approach of stylized, decorative and symbolic representation of birds and animals. Birds and animals drawings done as *'portraits'* were the mainstay of the painters at Jahangir's atelier. Earlier, in the sixteenth century, Mughal art, birds and animals are seen in connection with a happening or fable; or as illustrations in the *Babur Nama.* The latter, in a

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restrictive sense, may be taken as *'portraits'*. Apart from *Mansur, Muhammad Alam, Abu Hasan, Farrukh Beg, Govardhan, Manohar, Muhammad Nadir, Murad* and others equally contributed to the novel trend of realism in art. These true-to-life illustrations depict exact form, colour, minute details and natural surrounding could have helped in the development of the study of natural science in those times of adequate thought and direction had been given.

During Jahangir's reign, in the treatment of the pivotal figure as *'portrait'*, the landscape in its background also had a very important role to play. From this view-point, Mansur's *drawings* are the most powerful compositions to loan dynamism to the subject. Sometimes, *Mansur* opted for a plain, flat background hue where it complemented the subject, as in the painting of the Zebra. Here, the background painted in a reddish hue appears in contrast with a hint of its shade all around the main figure, enhancing the rythmic patterns of stripes on the zebra's skin. It makes the subject more effective and distinct, but the general effect produced is more of an illustration than a painting.

Mansur's expertise is in the depiction of the nature of animals. The most rythmic, powerful lines drawn with shaded, bold strokes in accordance with the external anatomy of the figure of the 'salt-water fish' reveal the swift and smoothly curved movement of the aquatic animal. The movement is further made prominent by leaving a large space for aerial perspective and by composing the figure from one end to the other horizontally with a slight diagonal incline in the picture planes. It is the most powerfully conceived realistic picture of an aquatic animal, equivalent example of which is not chanced upon elsewhere in the Mughal school.

The art of book illumination as developed in the Safavid and Timurid traditions was adopted by the Mughal artist. Mughal book-illustrations are more explanatory and detailed in content as compared to Jain paintings. Here, a Mughal artist comes across as a story letter; close links with

calligraphy and paintings, a trend of Persian Indian art, in general terms, is another conspicuous feature of the Mughal book illustrations. Pre-Mughal Indian art, in general terms, is restricted to the illustrations of the religious books whereas in Persian and Mughal art, both secular and religious books are equally preferred. *"The latter consist of the foll historical books: viz. Baburnama, Akbarnama, Tuzuk-i-Jahangirs', Jami-ut-Tawarikh, Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuria, Badshahnama and the literary books viz: Khamsa of Nizami, Khamsa of Amir Khusrau, Diwan of Anwari, Diwan of Hafiz, sacred books from Sanskrit and Hindi literature and legendary books viz Mahabharat, Ramayan, Harivansh, Kathasaritsagar, Raj Kumar, Nal Daman, Iyar-i-Danish".*[36]

Mughal emperors had a wider spectrum of selection as compared to the ruler of Persia. Akbar, who made efforts to synthesize the cultures of different peoples of the Indian subcontinent ordered for the translation of Hindu sacred books into Persian language and also got them illustrated. But, this tradition seems to have been discarded by the later Mughal emperors. Variety in the selection of books for the purpose of illustration ie from varied languages, subjects and religions as seen during Akbar's reign, illustrating books of history appears to have become a tradition of the Mughal art School. It was also done to make them more popular and attractive through pictorial representation of events.

"Akbar Nama compiled by Abul Fazl is a detailed history of Akbar's reign and includes an account of his predecessors too". It was compiled in three volumes, the first ends with the account of the middle of the 17th reignal year of Akbar. *Abu'l Fazl* was murdered in 1602, as a consequence, *Sheikh Faizi Sarhandi* undertook the task of writing the account of the years 1602-05.

The third volume known as *Ain-i-Akbari* was completed in 1596-97 and an addition was made in 1597-98. It's important to mention that *Abu'l Fazl* in *Ain-i-Akbari*[37] has listed the manuscripts illustrated at Akbar's ateliers but does not include the *Akbar Nama*. Since it wasn't completed at the time of compilation of the *Ain-i-Akbari*, the question of its reference in the above mentioned list does not arise.

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36. S.P. Verma, Mansur, the Master Painter of Jahangir's Epoch, Roop Lekha, Vol. 53, 1982, All India Fine Art and Crafts Society, New Delhi.
37. Institutes of Akbar.

The investigation show that *Abu'l Fazl's Akbar Nama* was not illustrated in it's full form. For this objective, only the section related to the history of Akbar's reign (1556-1605) was taken up. This too seems to be incomplete in known illustrated manuscripts of the *Akbar Nama*. The Chester Beatty manuscript of *Akbar Nama* commences with the accession date of Akbar, and ends with the account of the 35th reignal year of Akbar. Arnold and Wilkinson have reproduced 31 out of 61 illustrations of this copy.

The artist composed objects in diagonal settings. Miniatures taken from the present manuscript viz. *'Building of Fort At Agra', 'Bullocks dragging Cannon'*, execution of *Khan Zama's* followers has been *attributed to Miskin*, are the best examples. *Basawan* is another painter who preferred diagonal compositions: *'Elephants Crossing Bridge'*. Naturally, in a diagonal composition, the scope for the effective depiction of violent force and rythm greatly increases.

During Akbar's reign, collaboration by artists ie sketch by one painter, colouring by another and sometimes portraiture or figure drawing by a third painter was in vogue. Besides the miniatures of *Akbar Nama, Razm Nama, Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuria*,[38] *Jami-ut-Tawarikh* are the famed manuscripts of which illustrations are by-and-large, the production of joint work. However, it was not a universal system and numerous miniatures already in the manuscripts mentioned above and especially in *Anwar-i-Suhaili, Babur Nama, Iyar-i-Danish, Diwan-i-Hafiz* are the works of individual painters. Under Jahangir, this practice became unfashionable as specialization in a particular branch of painting became the artist's mainstay. Under the collaboration system, largely, the individuality of the painters was lost and merged into common characteristics. But, the works of distinguished painters like *Basawan, Farrukh Chela, Lal, Miskin* still remain distinct.

Farrukh Beg's work has a strong Persian flavour, more like the 1580's Safavid art tradition. In all the miniatures ascribed to this painter earliest of which is in *Diwan-i-Hafiz*,[39] his style remains distinguished and isolated in the Mughal school.

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38. History of Timur Dynasty.
39. Oriental Public Library, Rampur.

Females have been shown in no less than 12 illustrations. These include royal ladies, maids, musicians, dancers and women of the commoner's class. Their faces are drawn on set lines and hardly seem to be their portraits. Neverthless, rarely in the depiction of the women of the commoner's class faces appear to have been treated as portraits.

Male faces are more characterized and varied in expression. The Emperor's face appears identical. His portrait in profile is a very much adopted trend of the pre-Mughal Indian art which later took the place of Persian tradition.

In another instance, the faces of nobles and chieftains are distinct. Attention was paid to the rendering of the face contours and portrait painting in the miniatures executed by lesser skilled painters.

Male figures below the waist were drawn in a set pattern and were neutral in attitude with the action shown in the figure. For the display of rhythm the female figure dancers and musicians are exemplary.

Hasiyas[40] of *Akbar Nama* illuminations are invertably plain, similar to those seem in the manuscripts *Razm Nama, Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuria, Jami-ut-Tawarikh, Anwar-i-Suhaili* etc. These contain only bans of lines called *'Khat'*, drawn in varied pigments are there use to close either sides of the illustrations. Nevertheless margin painting was in vogue but not of primary importance. Margins embellished with floral patterns viz in the *Babur Nama*[41] set with hunting scenes and wild life etc. painted by Akbar's atelier are superlative examples of margin painting. From the sixteenth century, Mughal art later under Jahangir, attached importance to Margin painting and it appears to have developed as a separate branch.

"Akbar Nama miniatures are equally important for the analysis of sixteenth century Indian society. From this perspective miniatures depicting feasts and festivities, construction of buildings and out-door scenes are important. In them, masons, labourers, water carriers, bullock cart drivers, saints, dancers, musicians, elephant-

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40. Margins.
41. British Museum.

drivers, boat men, palanquin-bearers, cooks, stone cutters, shop keepers are shown. In the miniatures, ornaments, tools, habits and social life are depicted which make source of cultural history of the people of those days. Apart from this, a variety of cultural items, viz arms and armour, costumes, musical instruments, utensils, furniture water transport, road journey, animals carrying loads are faithfully represented by the artists of Akbarnama, which a historian of medival India can ill-afford to pass".[42]

Akbar Stages a Shikar near Lahore

Akbar desired to go hunting and for the Qamargah which is its most delightful form. He commanded that the birds and animals should be herded together from near the mountains. On one side and from the river Bihat on the other. Each district were handed to senior officers, Babshis, Tawaics and Sazawals who were appointed to ever quarter. Several thousand footmen were also appointed to drive the game.....

First, Akbar thoughly inspected the hunting grounds...and then mounted his horse to pursue a prancing deer. He was armed with the arrow, sword, lance and musket. At the beginning, the hunting ground's circumference was ten miles. Gradually, as the Qamargah was pushed in, the area decreased.... The officers placed screens in front of their stations and guarded the game, day and night. After the emperor had enjoyed a variety of sports for a five-day span and then great officers and the attendant of the harem were allowed to come into the hunting grounds.

One of the unusual events that happened during the hunting was that Hamid Babari, one of the yesawals had become wicked and tried to kill one of the court's servants with an arrow. The servant later reported this incident to Akbar. Akbar was very annoyed and commanded that Quly Khan should be given capital punishment and gave his special sword to Quly Khan... Quly Khan struck Baberi twice with the sword by Baberi was unhurt. Baffled by this mysterious happening, Baberi's life was pardoned by as a warning his head was shaved and he was made

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42. S.P. Verma, Illustration of Akbarnama, Vol. 51, 1979-86, Journal of All India Fine Art and Crafts Society, New Delhi.

to mount a donkey and taken round the hunting ground.

Context: For the Mughals, the agonised hunt had become a sort of routine entertainment and festivity held annually or even more. This special event was held on a grand, never held before scale. The sixteenth century chronicle of the Tarikh-i-Alfi states that the hunt was so massive it had 50,000 beaters. The report given by Nizammudin Ahmed in the Tabaqat is helpful since he accepts being an eyewitness to this event. He describes the royal pavilion being pitched in the centre of the enclosure, exactly as shown in this double page.

Description: The shikar starts with a dynamic chase from the left page, which covers the complete hunting area. Action is thus restricted into an area encircled with wooden barricades, ringed with flaming torches at night. The black buck, the barasingha, the nilgai and spotted gazelles were also herded around the pavilion, joined by jackals, foxes and rabbits. The king is shown on hot trail of a barasingha, urging on his white horse with spurs.

The emperor's arrow pierced the hind quarters of the barasingha; whose eyes have an agonised look and mouth hang's open in the cry of death.

Within the arena study cheetahs are led around the ring by their trainers or are released to hunt the deer. The cooks are busy skinning rabbits and deer, preparing for the feast. The upper corner depict Hamid Baberi on the ass, being made to ride backwards, completely humiliated. This character study is a tiny detail in a scenes from with movement and energy emanates, but it is repeated in a later composition of this very shikar which is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Artists: It appears that it was good judgement to make Miskina and Mansur work jointly on the left page. This indicates that their excellence in animal rendering had been noted and appreciated. This resulted in a dynamic study of the fleeing deer, their bodies taut and muscles tensed in flight. The modulation of tones in soft greys and browns is attained by Miskina, who is well aware of the benifits of painting in monochromes.

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BHAGWATI

This painter's work done in Akbar's atelier is known to us only through mins. 1-3. The *Bhagwati* of Akbar's court is different from his namesake who worked for *Abdu'r Rakhim Khan-i-Khanah,* on the ground of style. The letter has contributed miniatures in the *Shah Nama.* For the convenience of readers who may wish to form their opinion about the identity of this painter, the catalogue lists the paintings ascribed to them separately.

Portrait of Humayun. On the right two *Hajis* reciting the *Surab-i-Fatiba;* on the left Lashkar Khan, Mirza Shaham and Khushhal Beg.
Inscription: *Bhagwati*
Album, BM, Add. 18801, fol. 42.
Mentioned: Rieu (1), II, 778-81; Titley (1), 164.
Reproduced and described: Martin (1), I, 84, fig. 42; Coomaraswamy (3), 2, pl. 1, fig. 2; Mulk Raj Anand (1), fig.9; Arnold and Binyon (1), pl. 5; Eastman (1), 66, fig. 8. Exhibited at BM (1961). *Exhibition of Islamic Art,* no. 104.
Feasting in the open.
Inscription: *'Amal-i-Bhagwati* (Work of Bhagwati).
Album, RLWC, B 20, no. 6a.
Described: Verma (21), 260.
A camp in hilly country.
Inscription: *'Amal-i-Bhagwati.*
Album, RLWC, B 20, no. 10 a.
Described: Verma (21), 260.

BHAWANI

In joint work Bhawani mainly contributes only to *'colouring'.* An early painter of Akbar's time with work in Ramayana. He may be distinguished from Bhawani the Elder, since there is no Bhawani the Younger. Arnold and Wilkinson identify *Bhawani* with *Bhawanidas,* father of Govardhan apparently relying on this identification, describes Bhawanidas as a painter

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of Akbar's reign. No miniature ascribed to Bhawanidas exists. For an eighteenth-century miniature attributed to Bhawanidas.

Cremation of Raja Dasratha.
Inscription: *Tarh-i-Tulsi Kalan, 'amal-i-Bhawani* (Sketch by Tulsi the Elder, colouring by Bhawani).
Ramayan, SMS, no. AG. 1917.
Jatayu fights Ravana to protect Sita.
Inscription: *Tarh-i-Tulsi, 'amal-i-Bhawani* (Sketch by Tulsi, colouring by Bhawani).
Ramayan, SMS, no. AG. 1930.
Trisira faces Rama's army.
Inscription: *Tarh-i-Tulsi Kalan, 'amal-i-Bhawani.*
Ramayan, SMS, no. AG. 1966.
Indrajita orders his charioteer.
Inscription: *Tarh-i-Kesav Kalan, 'amal-i-Bhawani* (Sketch by Kesav the elder, colouring by Bhawani).
Ramayan, SMS, no. AG. 2004.
Visnu on Garuda.
Inscription: *Tarh-i-La'l, 'amal-i-Bhawani.*
Ramayan, SMS, no. AG. 2005.
Ravana with his vimana (flying machine).
Inscription: *Tarh-i-Tulsi Kalan, 'amal-i-Bhawani* (Sketch by Tulsi the Elder, colouring by Bhawani).
Ramayan, SMS, no. AG. 2007.
Bhima arrives at Dwarka.
Inscription: *'Amal-i-Bhawani* (Work of Bhawani).
Razmnama.

GOVARDHAN

Govardhan was the son of Bhawanidas, according to the signed inscription on a margin painting in miniature 10. Here *Govardhan* also styles himself

kamtarin khanazadan,[43] implying that his father had also been in Imperial service. There is indeed a suggestion that the father Bhawanidas is really the painter Bhawani, whose work belongs to Akbar's reign alone. In any case *Govardhan* seems to have had a Persian education, since the autograph on miniature 10 is in a firm hand. *Govardhan* seems to have joined the Mughal atelier towards the close of Akbar's reign. His earlier miniatures are in the *Akbar Nama*. His self portrait in miniature 10, dated 1609-10, shows him as a very young man.

His early work in Akbar's time already shows his talent, visible particularly in the fine shading, distant perspectives, and capacity for portraiture. It is noteworthy that he worked singly on the miniatures ascribed to him: he did not do any joint work.

Govardhan gained considerable status at Jahangir's court, and two of his miniature and possibly a third bear Jahangir's autograph. Jahangir's writing on miniature 24 is of particular interest, since it shows that *Govardhan* accompanied the Emperor to Ahmadabad where he drew the portrait of Bhara, the chief of Kutch, who had come to wait on the Emperor; and Jahangir obviously cherished the occasion as well as the portrait.

Govardhan was the artist of three emperor's court miniature mostly he was executed during Shah Jahan's reign; may fairly be dated. *Govardhan* must have been of a very advanced age at this time, but his skill does not seem to have been affected in any way.

Two portraits of the artist survive, one a self-portrait, and the other by Daulat. The second belongs to Jahangir's reign, and is obviously later than the first.

Govardhan excelled in portraiture, and he painted human figures and animals with equal skill. His portraits show an understanding of Western art; and the deep shading with the suggestion of shadows, treatment of space with a scientific perspective, show definite Western influence. *Govardhan's*

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43. Meanest of the Khanazad.

composition and subjects are often quite original; he achieves considerable realism in depiction and captures his subjects' character and feeling with intimacy. Beach remarks: *"The development of Govardhan's style follows the general trend of painting at the time. Yet, more than any of his compatriots, Govardhan, in his later illustration, seems to work at an extreme of refinement that, on occasion, passes into the effete, and this is true of subject as well as style. It seems evident that Govardhan's manner of painting was unusually responsive to his own enthusiasms and sensibilities, a claim that could not be made for such diverse other artists as Manohar, Hashim, or Mansur, among others". He adds "No other Mughal artists of the period celebrates, with such sympathy and insight, the variety of humanity found in India".*

Two miniatures ascribed to Govardhan are thought to be possibly the work of another artist, also named Govardhan, who worked in the 18th century and whose existence and work in the India Office Library have been discussed and published by Falk and Archer. The large number of other miniatures dubiously attributed to *Govardhan* with little justification, need not be taken into account in judging the artist's work.

Akbar receiving his younger brother, Mirza Muhammad Hakim.
Inscription: *Govardhan.*
Akb., CBL, f. 94b.
Reproduced and described: Arnold and Wilkinson (1), I, 7, II, pl. 16.
Abu'l Fazl presenting the second volume of *Akbarnama* to Akbar (double-page illustration).
Inscription: *Govardhan.*
Akb., CBL, ff. 176b and 177.
Reproduced and described: Arnold and Wilkinson (1), I, 10, II, frontispiece (colour); Wellesz (3), pl. 34.
Schulberg (1), 177 (text and pl. colour); Hambly (1), pl. 9 (colour); Skelton (6), 147, pl. 85 (right); Godden (1), pl. p. 143 (colour).
Exhibited at Royal Academy of Arts, London (1947-8). Ashton (1), (ed.), 152, no. 677 (d); *Exhibition of Art*, no. 901.

★★★

Exhibited at VA (1982). Skelton (10), no. 35.
Akbar granting audience to his nobles.
Inscription: *Govardhan.*
Akb., CBL, f. 201.
Reproduced and described: Arnold and Wilkinson (1), I, 10, II, pl. 31.
The child Akbar being taught to use a gun by Bairam Khan.
Inscription: *Goverdhan.*
Akb., BM, Or. 12988, f. 158a.
Reproduced and described: Schulberg (1), 168 (text and pl. in colour); Godden (1), pl. p. 111 (colour); Titley (1), 5, no. 11 (40); Smart (3), fig. 1.
Picture of Timur.
Inscription: By Govardhan. Text not published.
CBL.
Described: Arnold (4), 71 where it is said to bear Jahangir's autograph.
Timur, Babur and Humayun.
Inscription: *'Amal-i-Govardhan* (Work of Govardhan).
Minto (A), VA, IM, 8-1925.
Reproduced: Godden (1), pl. p. 13 (colour).
Mentioned: Welch (8), 48, no. 17; Beach (3), 124.
Exhibited at VA (1982). Skelton (10), 41, no. 52, where miniature also illustrated.

MY FINDING AND CRITICAL EVALUATION

Though the traditional style of designing illustrations was by a singular artist and the execution by an assistant, but it was discontinued mainly due the demand of consistency and uniformly high quality in later projects.

Mir Sayyid Ali was one such Tabrizi artist who made himself famous in his art and was extremely successful in Akbar's court. He illustrated a majority of the Hamza Nama illustrations, in his inimitable Safavid style. He also contributed to the British Museum's

Darab Nama and Babar Nama, the Jaipur Razm Nama, the Bankipur Timur Nama, South Kensington's Akbarnama and Bodleian's Baharistan and Mr Dyson Perrin's Khamsah, But beyond Abu'l Fazl's reference to his ability, nothing more is known of his life or his later connection with the Mughal school.

Daswanth was an artistic genius who was known as the "first master of his age". But, though his paintings are numerous, there is no specimen of his singular effort. The paintings of the Razm Nama, the (Bankipur) Timur Nama and the Babar Nama and Darab Nama also have his paintings rendered jointly with other artists. His services were deemed so valuable that he was appointed *"Master of the Mint"*, which distinguished position he served with great credit for several years. Unfortunately, he committed suicide when quite young.

Abu'l Fazl was Akbar's confidant and historian. He was gifted with *extraordinary memory and was a great intellectual, quite* ahead of his times.

Aqa Riza has been referred to very briefly by Jahangir along with his son-Abul Hasan, who was also an exceptionally talented painter. Aqa Riza was a professionally trained Safavid painter when he arrived at the Mughal court, his works in the Muraqqa-e-Gulshan almost purely Iranian. His paintings can also be seen in the 'Anwar-i-Suhaili', British Library. However, despite superficial "Mughalisation" and being influenced by the European Rennaissance art, Aqa Riza was unable to go beyond traditional attitudes towards the human form and his style went out-of-date.

Abdus Samad was one of the prominent Iranian painters who accompanied Humayun from Iran to India and whose activity and prestige were important elements in evolving the Mughal style. He was also known as the 'Shirin Qalam'. Along with Mir-

Sayyid-Ali, he helped established the Mughal atelier and all the other artists worked under the supervision of these two masters. He supervised the Hamzanama. His works known to us indicate that he was a conservative. His compositions are decorative and flat, excellentely composed and minutely detailed and landscaped. He acted as a continuous model of technical skill and control. He was also appointed director of the imperial mint at the capital, Fatehpur Sikri.

Bishan Das's career divides itself into two parts. In 1613, he was chosen to accompany the embassy of Khan Alam to the court of the Safavid Shah Abbas at Ishfahan where he drew the portraits of the shah, members of his family and the chief men of his state and his work was greatly appreciated.

On his return, he had achieved enough prominence by the first decade of the seventeenth century, to be included amongst the portrait painters in the margins of the Gulshan album. His style is quite recognizable and consistent. His lines were unselfconscious and his figures had warmth and animation, making them life-like. His painters, specially the later ones, were spatially imbalanced and testified to his proximity to Persian art.

Kesu Das was one of the greatest of Akbar's artist and is placed just below Basawan in the list of painters given by Abu'l Fazl in the Ain-i-Akbari. His best known for his copies and adaptations of European prints. He rendered several paintings in the Dārab Nama, the Razm Nama. After the Razm Nama project, Kesu's assignments were increased and by the time, the first Akbar Nama commenced, he was the third most brilliant designer. He was a brilliant technician. He also worked in the Diwan-e-Shahi, the Ramayan and Akbar Nama.

★★★

Basawan in named in the Ain-i-Akbari as the greatest of Akbar's painters after Mir Saiyyid Ali, Abdus Samad and Daswanth. Basawan, thus, was the most prominent prestigious and influential painter active during the later years of Akbar's reign. His list of works practically include the entire list of major Akbari manuscripts for illustration that were collaborations. As a result of his study of European prints, his figures defined by weight and mass, and character studies are unparalled. His achievement was crucial to the development of Jahangir portraiture in the early seventeenth century, an astounding feat since he was instrumental in the formation of the quite different early Mughal style. His later works were extremely refined and mature, of the Darab Nama style.

Miskin had rendered the maximum number of miniatures and appears to have attained perfection in animal rendering. His animal figures were shown in a dynamic and violent rythm rarely seen in any other 16th century Mughal miniature. In this context, he even surpassed Basawan. He achieved perfection in depicting flora-fauna and became an unrivalled painter of his age during Jahangir's rule.

Mansur's known career commenced in the late 1580's when he worked under Kanha, an animal specialist. Mansur also became an expert in rendering animals, having trained under major artists. Though, his work as portrait painter was indifferent. He specialised in rendering birds animals and flowers and was conferred the title 'Nadirul-Asr'. Knowledge of his life is untraceable and he seems to have become attached to the atelier after 1595. The fact that Mansur achieved perfection in a short span of time is obvious from the inscription given with an epithet "ustad". His pictures of the Babur Nama are proof of details, true-to-life representation, truthful depiction of colours etc.

***

Jahangir, who was supremely enchanted by rare birds and animals, insisted an maintaining pictorial records of them, apart from descriptive notes on their behaviour, life and other details in his memoirs. The onus of portraying them was Mansur's. His paintings drawn from life are the best examples of realism in the history of art in India. He drew rythmic, powerful lines, with shaded, bold strokes in accordance with the external anatomy of the creature's figure.

There were numerous painters in the Mughal atelier from which the following have been repeatedly mentioned:- Muhammad Alam, Abu Hasan, Farrukh Beg, Manohar, Murad, Muhammad Nadir, Inayat, Pidarath, Kanha, Kesu and Mahesh.

The art of book illustration as developed in the Safavid and Timurid tradition was adopted by the Mughal artist. The Mughal manuscript illustrations are more detailed and explanatory in content as compared to Jain paintings. Unlike pre-Mughal manuscripts, manuscript illustration was not restricted to religious texts. The variety in the selection of books for the purpose of illustration i.e. from varied languages, subjects and religions as seen during Akbar's reign, illustrating books of history appears to have become a tradition of the Mughal art school.

During his reign, collaboration by artist ie sketch by one painter, colouring by another and sometimes portraiture or figure drawing by a third person was in vogue. But, it was not a universal system, several manuscripts had paintings made completely by a singular artist. Under Jahangir, specialization became the artist's mainstay. The collaboration system subdued, to a great extent, the individuality of an artist.

The facial depiction during Akbar's reign and even after him was a little stiff and lifeless. Female figures were rarely shown.

★★★

Margin painting became fashionable under Akbar, but it was only under Jahāngir that it became a separate branch.

The Akbar Nama miniatures are extremely important for the analysis of sixteenth century, Indian Society. They are a source for studying the landscape, architecture, social structure, habits, ornaments, apparel, tools, habits of the people and of the different classes of people. We also gather information about the cultural history of the people of those days. Apart from this, a variety of cultural items namely, arms and armour, musical instruments, utensils, furniture, water transport, road journeys, animals carrying loads are faithfully represented by the Akbar Nama's artists, which a historian of medieval Indian cannot ignore.

★★★





Chapter VI





Conclusion and Critical Evaluation

"Themes and subjects were selected by the imperial masters rather than the artists themselves. The thematic contents of the painting reflect the personal tastes and temperaments, prides and preferences, fashions, pleasures and pastimes of the individual imperial patrons and the nobles of the court"

Mughal art has been of the most significant and vital school in the History of Indian art. After a detailed study of the origin and founding of the Mughal school, I strongly tend to agree that early Mughal paintings were the direct influence of the Indian school of Bihzad. Babur was the conneissiur and critic of art and painting and Babur's son, Humayun was intrumental in establishing an atelier in India and the work of painting seriously began. The Persian artists who highly impressed Humayun by their work, accompanied him to India and became the guiding hand behind the art school. They assisted greatly in the creation of the *'Dastan-i-Amir Hamza'* which was the first of the great series which resulted in the reputation of the Mughal school that is everlasting. The form and style of painting, generally known as *'Mughal painting'* was indeed and essentially the product and creation of the Mughal court. It is very evident to distinguish the paintings of the courts of the emperors Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan by style, form and content.

Portraiture occupied a very important position in the Mughal painting. Numerous Mughal emperors and nobles were painted during the Mughal period. Akbar had originated a new style of painting with a distinct technique and method. The chief objective, as per my analysis, was to produce illustrated manuscripts which were an elaborate production, requiring the effort and coordination of calligraphers and painters. Mughal artists were exposed to the sophisticated techniques of Persian and European traditions and I am convinced that it reflected an immense increase in the range of colours. The Persian flavour

is extremely strong but the Indian elements too have been evident in the shape of faces and vitality. Akbar's interest in the various religions is magnified by his inclination to the Hindu classics, owing to the fact that he ordered the artists to illustrate the epics, Ramayana and the Mahabharata or *Razm Nama*.

The majority of painters in the atelier were Indians who produced a school of Persian techniques blended with Indian training, evolving a concept of painting with the synthesis of the two styles. The miniatures became records of the emperor Akbar's activities.

The most outstanding feature of the Mughal artists achievement, as per my study, has been the expertise with which the technique derived from completely varied sources amalgamated into a harmonious whole. The paintings were essentially Persian synthesised with Indian and European styles.

The Mughal painting school was established by Akbar. He personally supervised the work of Indian and Persian artists and lavished wealth and titles on his talented artists. Akbar pioneered manuscript illustration. The most well known being the *Hamza Nama, Akbar Nama, Darab Nama, Ain-i-Akbari and Din-i-Ilahi*. Several Hindu manuscripts were also illustrated. His interest in Indian literature contributed to the changing of the Mughal school from its Persian beginning into an indigenous tradition.

The atelier was provided with the best of paper and other related material. Colours and pigments were sourced from natural resources and processed. Painting tools were made using the animal hair, guills etc. Gold and silver were also generously used to incorporate a very rich visual approach to the manuscripts.

☆★☆

The most important and outstanding feature of the Mughal artist's achievement, as per my critical analysis, has been the expertise with which the technique derived from varied sources were fused into a harmoneous whole. The paintings were essentially Persian synthesised with Indian and European Renaissance styles.

The styles adopted during Akbar's reign were carried on and further refined and developed under Shah Jahan. The Mughal miniatures does not portray spiritual and emotional matters. This objectivity is the basic parameter of the Mughal miniatures. Interestingly, what I have observed and concluded is that though the Mughal miniatures tried to depict reality and nature at its best, it rarely showed a female figure. The court painters excelled and their delicate miniatures teemed with life with master brush strokes and details.

The Hamza Nama shows a daramatic precedence of the romantic escapedes and adventures in deep expressive colours and a love of landscape and architecture. The *Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuria* is calligraphed in a bold and beautiful scripts. The *Gulistan-i-Sadi* is known for its lavish gold decoration and treatment of flora and fauna.

Portrait paintings were elevated to its great heights as the Mughal emperors had great interest in portraiture. Even in historical illustrations that depicted crowded court scenes, I can strongly visualize the utmost care and concern with which the individual faces and features were drawn and painted, highlighting the physical and psychological characteristics of the individuals being drawn. The use of shaded lines and colour tonating resulted in a 3-D effect.

I am convinced and could not agree more that Akbar's contribution to the Mughal art has been outstanding with Akbar's

great vision and unique judgement of talent that ensured and elevated the atelier of unsurpassed talent and timeless masterpieces.

A climate of creativity and experimentation prevailed by the introduction of European prints and paintings brought by the Jesuits. Miniature copies of Christian pictures became popular and numerous religious themes were painted by the court atelier. Akbar encouraged European art in all its dominions and even patronized its painters. The Mughal painting was vital and receptive enough to absorb a number of elements of contemporary West European Renaissance painting. The influence of European and Mughal art was mutual. Renaissance painters were greatly impressed by the Indian miniatures. The knowledge of Christianity was embedded in the Mughal myth and symbolism apart from the perspectives and shading techniques.

Akbar was the first monarch to be interested in European art and obtained concrete knowledge of the Christian religious paintings. The work of numerous German and Finnish engravers were known to the Mughal court painters. The master painters in the atelier exhibit an excellent understanding of the Western techniques. I conclude that during Akbar reign, landscapes and motifs were shown as salient features of the composition and two types of European pictorial art was available to the Mughal atelier—engravings and illustrated manuscripts.

The religious manuscript was painted including the Bible yet it did not influence the Mughal artists to a great extent. The European prints were copied by Mughal artists but their Islamic traditions remained contrary. The Mughals used highlighting and shading to mark the forms to exist whereas the Deccanis did it

to intensify the portrait. In spite of the numerous obligations, the Mughal school maintained its own indigenous qualities.

It is concluded that the Jain style of manuscript illustration influenced the Mughal school and vice-versa. Mughal period being the richest by the persistent uniformity of the shape and form of articles of utility, cultural interest and institution. A careful scruitinization infers that the themes chosen and the technique that followed were certainly of the miniature and that the Persian painting was indeed a miniaturist art. In the Hamza paintings, figures more vigorously and contributed dynamism of the entire composition while the Persian painting do not reflect any emotion. The Akbari painters drew inspiration from Persian sources on the very themes of heroic events and battle fields. Sufis and saints were popular themes too in Persian painting which influenced the Akbari paintings. Persian ethnic types are very common in the Hamza paintings. both in male and female figuration.

The architectural motifs in Akbari paintings are both Persian and Indian prototypes, as is in the case of the rendering of foliage, but the initial decorative aspects disappeared. The Akbari manuscripts are illustrated with beautiful scenes depicting nature by techniques identical to Persian ones. These techniques were also repeated in drawing mountains and hillocks but the Mughal painters seem to have experimented with the motifs. The Persian feature of incorporating certain shapes of animals and human figures was also copied.

The composition of Akbari painting was based on the same format as the Persian ones. A few, however also followed various European geometrical methods.

★★★

The use of multiple perspectives' in plastic art form was popular in the sub-continent of India and Persia during the medieval period and remained so till the end of the sixteenth century.

Akbar's painters adopted the linear rythm of the Indian and Persian traditions. The colour pallete, called tempera in modern times, was however a purely Indian device.

From their very inception, Akbari paintings were different from contemporary, classical Persian painting and had numerous elements which could not have any Persian reference. Akbar's decision that he was an Indian, aided the acclimatizing of his Persian cultural inheritance with India's. Thus, Akbari paintings happen to be a creative fusion of mainly Persian elements with Indian and European features.

My detailed study of the works and the styles adopted by the Mughal painters leads to the conclusion that though the traditional style of designing illustration was by a singular artist with the help of an assistant, this was later rejected primarily because of the increasing demand of consistency and uniformly high quality in all the projects.

The atelier has numerous top-class painters who progressed to become 'Ustads' or 'Masters'.

Mir Saiyyid Ali is a prime example of one such Tabrizi artist who contributed to various manuscripts of prime importance such as the *Darab Nama, Babar Nama, Razm Nama, Timur Nama* and many others in his inimitable Safavid style. But beyond Abu'l Fazl's reference to his ability, nothing more is known of his later connection to the Mughal school.

Dasawanth was a Hindu painter who was titled the *"first master of his age"*. He illustrated numerous important manuscripts though

there is no specimen of his singular effort. He was appointed to the exalted position of the *"Master of the Mint"* which he served creditably for several years prior to his unfortunate suicide.

Abu'l Fazl was Akbar's confidant and historian. He was gifted with an extra-ordinary memory and genius and possessed a vision which made him quite ahead of his times.

Aqa Riza was a professionally trained Safavid painter when he arrived at the Mughal court. However, despite adopting a veneer of *"Mughalisation"*, and being influenced by European Rennaissance art, he could not adapt his traditional attitudes of the modern ones and his style became passe'.

Abdus Samad was one of the most important Persian painters who accompanied Humayun to India and helped set up the Mughal atelier along with Mir Saiyyid Ali. He was honoured with the title of *'Shirin Qalam'*. The various artists of the atelier worked under these two masters. Abdus Samad acted as a continuous model of technical skill and control. He was also appointed as the Director of the Imperial Mint at Fatehpur Sikri (the capital).

Bishan Das was a brilliant painter chosen to accompany the embassy of Khan Alam to the court of Safavid Shah Abbas at Ishfanan where he painted portraits of various grandees of the royal clan which were greatly appreciated. On his return, he was given due prominence. His style is recognizable, consistent and depicts close proximity to Persian art.

Kesu Das was one of the greatest of Akbar's artist and is placed first below Basawan in the list of painters given by Abu'l Fazl in the *Ain-i-Akbari*. He was famed for his copies and adaptation of European prints. He was also a brilliant technician and by the time the first *Akbar Nama* commenced, the third most brilliant designer.

☆★☆

Basawan was the most important, prestigious and influential painter during the later years of Akbar's reign. His name can be seen in practically the entire list of the major Akbari manuscripts that were collaborations. His figures and character studies were unique. His achievements were crucial to the development of Jahangiri portraiture in the early seventeenth century.

Miskin had rendered the maximum number of miniature and seems to have achieved perfection in animal rendering. In rendering flora and fauna he even surpassed Basawan and became an unrivalled painter of his age during Jahangir's rule.

Mansur had also become the master in rendering animals, having trained under major artists. His specialization in rendering birds, animals and flowers conferred on him the title '*Nadirul-Asr*'. His perfection in his art is obvious from the inscription with an ephithet 'Ustad'.

There were numerous painters in the Mughal atelier from which the following names are found repeatedly, Mohammed Alam, Abu Hasan, Farrukh Beg, Manohar, Murad, Muhammad Nadir, Inayat, Pidarath, Kanha, Kesu and Mahesh.

The art of book illustration as found in the Safavid and Timurid styles was adopted by the Mughal artist. The Mughal manuscripts were more detailed and explanatory in content as compared to Jain paintings. The variety in the selection of the books to be illustrated in terms of different languages, subjects and religious became a tradition with the Mughal school.

Unlike Akbar's reign, in which the paintings were collaborations, specialization became the artist's mainstay under Jahangir. Margin painting also developed as a separate branch only under Jahangir. The imperial masters related the themes or subjects.

★★★

The thematic contents of the paintings were a reflection of the personal tastes, pride, pleasure, preferences, hobbies and temperament of the individuals kinds. In every sense, Mughal painting was a court art.

Thus, one concludes that the painters and their illustrations are an extremely important source of the the cultural history of the people of those days, then society, and all the related features and elements of their day-to-day lines. The faithful representations seen in the Akbari paintings cannot be ignored or their importance undermined by any historian or research scholar including myself. I hereby accomplish the artistic activities in miniature painting during Akbar's reign with a true sense of purpose and direction, with emphasis on the topics conditioned by the preferences and analysis.

☆★☆





Photographic Profile







Plate 01



Plate 02



Plate 03



Plate 04



Plate 05



Plate 06



Plate 07


از پی او بر ان جسر بر آمده و دیده و کشتیهای جسر از گران سنگی ان دو کوه پیکر گاه در آب فرو میرفت

Plate 08

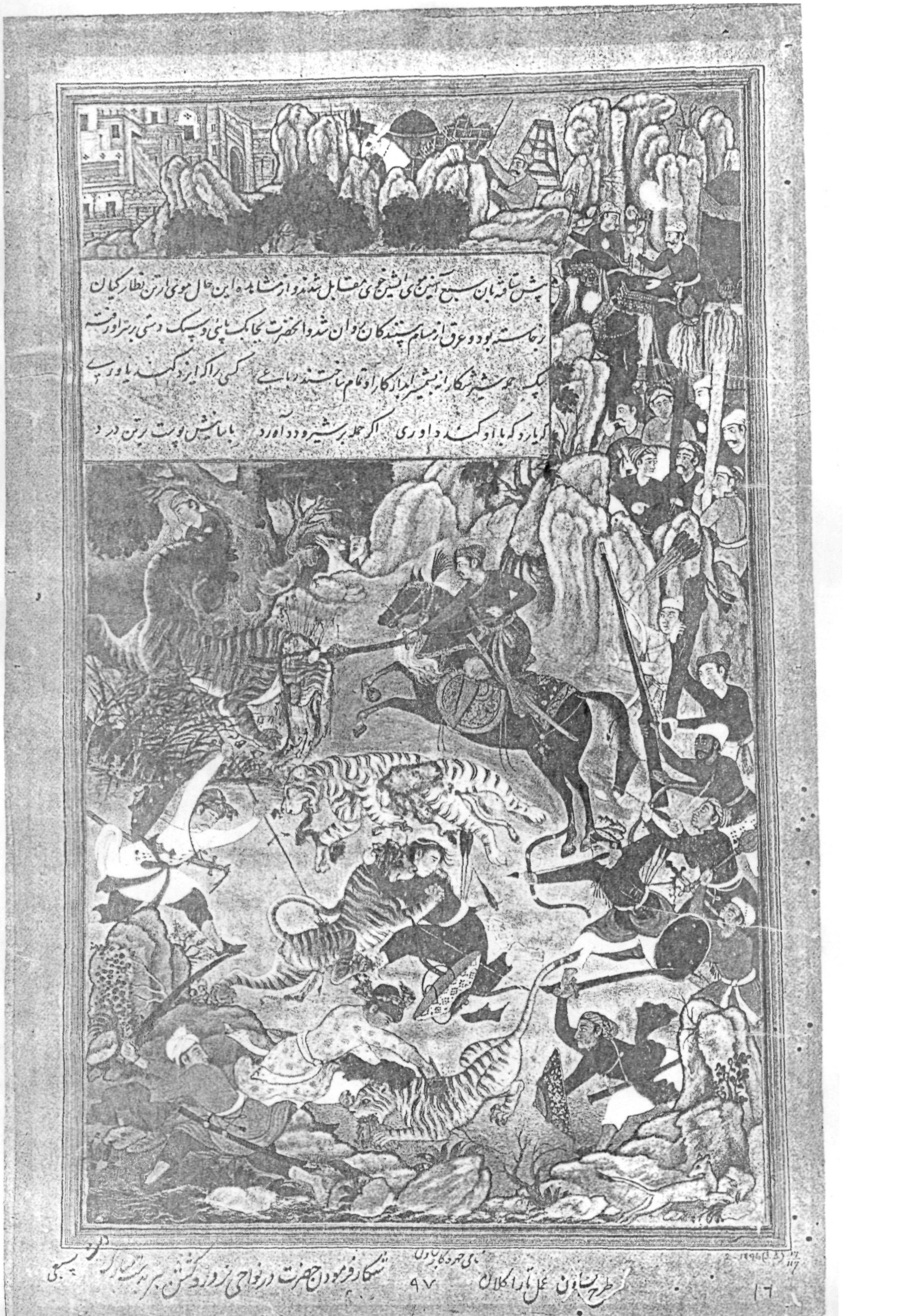


Plate No 9



Plate 10



Plate 11



Plate 12



Plate 13



Plate 14



Plate 15



Plate 16



Plate 17



Plate 18



Plate 19



Plate 20



Plate 21



Plate 22



Plate 23



Plate 24



Plate 25



Plate 26



Plate 27



Plate 28



Plate 29



Plate 30



Plate 31

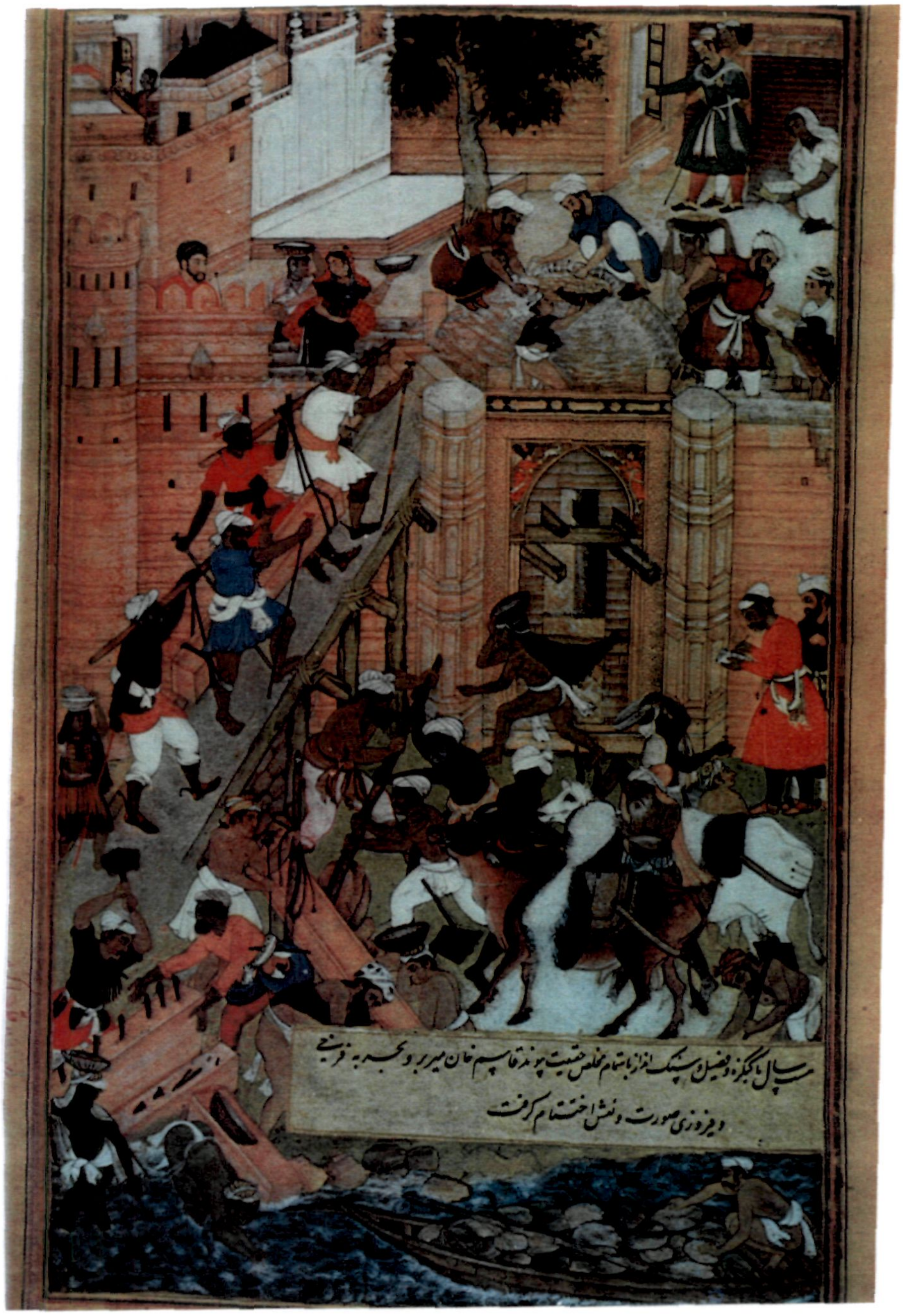


Plate 32


سایر طبقات در حواشی موکب معلی می باشند اشارت فرمودند که کومک پریان باشند
در حمله پریان بر

Plate 33



Plate 34



Plate 35

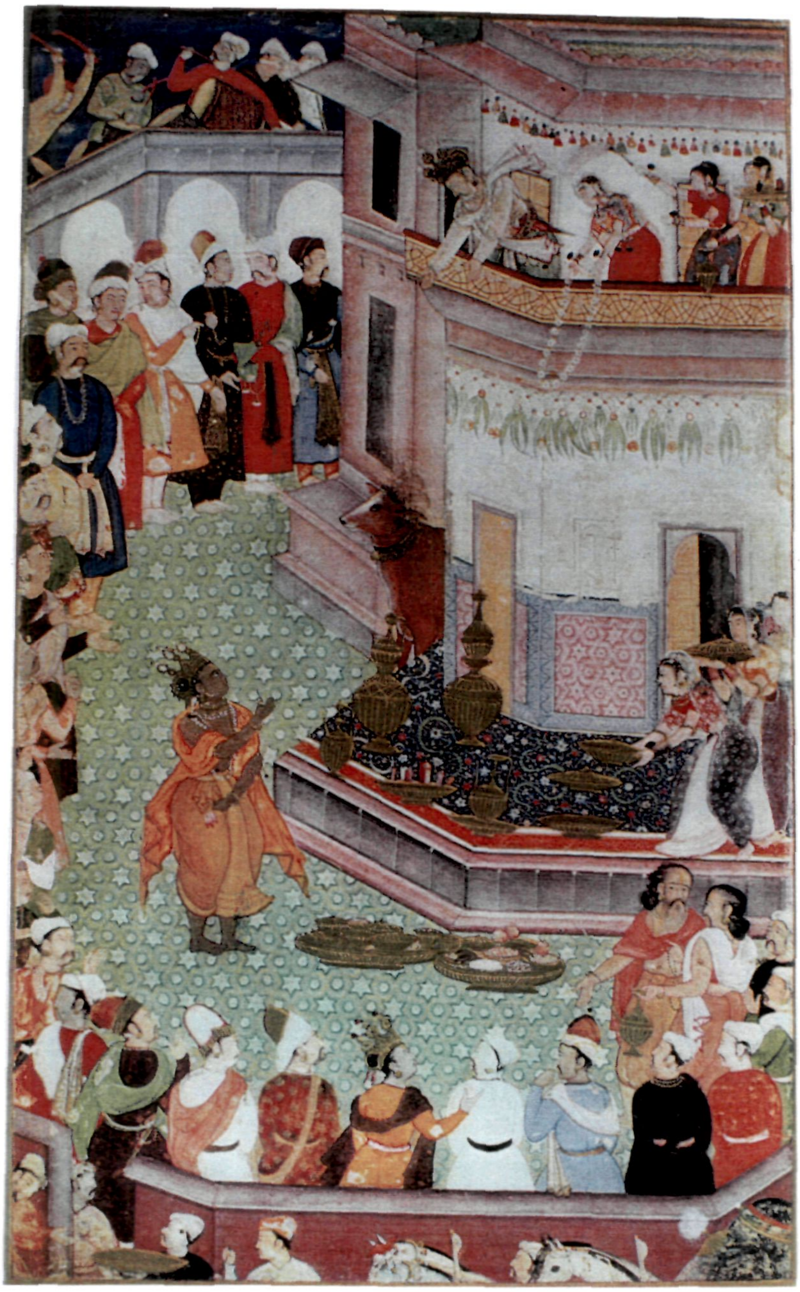


Plate 36



Plate 37



Plate 38



Plate 39



Plate 40



Plate 41


فرستادند در قندز آمده بمن همراه شدند امتداد مفارقت به ده سال
من و محمدی کوکلداش دو بدو آمدیم بیگم و نزدیکان ایشان نشناختند با وجود
آنکه گفتم هم بعد از مدتی شناختند دختر دیگر مهربانو بیگم خواهر زائیده

Plate 42



Plate 43



Plate 44



Plate 45



Plate 46



Plate 47



Plate 48



Plate 49



Plate 50



Plate 51



Plate 52



Plate 53



Plate 54


چو شاه جهانگیر و عباس شاه
دو شاه جوانبخت ظل اله
بشادی گرفته بکف جام جم
بدولت نشستند پهلوی هم
جهان گرد آباد از عدلشان
بباشند آسوده خلق جهان
چو یار و برادر بهم درخورند
الهی بدولت ز هم برخورند

Plate 55


از سرخ و از سفید و از سیاه و از زرخت و از جنس ساچقیها
فرمودم که در پیش من ریلوچه انداختند

Plate 56



Plate 57


آتش را روشن ساخته خود را گرم ساختیم اگرچه محل آتش روشن کردن نبود اما
از ضرب سرما بی طاقت شده آتش روشن کرده شد صبح نزدیک شده بود که از دامنه کوه

Plate 58



Plate 59



Plate 60




List Of Illustrations
Bibliography




Plate 01 *Husain Quli presents prisoners of war from Gujarat: Akbar Nama*, I.S. 2/1896, double page, Acc. No. 113 and 112/117. Inscribed: (right page) amal Husain Naqqash chehra nami Kesu.

Plate 02 *Daud Shah of Bengal is taken prisoner: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 102/117. Inscribed: tarah Lal amal Premjiv Gujerati. 152.

Plate 03 *An attempt to assassinate Akbar at Delhi: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 33/117. Inscribed: tarah Jagan amal Bhawani Kalan chehra nami Madhu. 80.

Translation of Persian inscription:

(Top): "I just stealthly flung a glance to know her mood and crushed a handful of lump into dust to tell her my fate".

(Bottom): "I tried to foget him from my life lest some people, suspecting him as the cause of my condition nearing death, slash him into pieces as my murderer".

Plate 04 *Akbar stages a shikar near Lahore: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1897, Acc. Nos. 55 and 56/117. Inscribed: tarah Miskina amal Mansur. 100.

Plate 05 *The imperial army crosses the Ganges astride elephants: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 60/117. Inscribed: amal Ikhlas nami chehra Madhu. 110.

Plate 06 *Rejoicings on the birth of Prince Salim at Fatehpur: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 78/117. Inscribed: tarah Kesu Kalan amal Ramdas. 128.

Plate 07 *Akbar receives trophies of war from Asaf Khan:* Akbar Nama, I.S. 2/1896, double plage, Acc. Nos. 51 and 52/117. Inscribed: amal Nanha.

Plate 08 *Akbar's pilgrimage on foot to Ajmer in thanksgiving: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 77/117. Inscribed: tarah Basawan amal Nand Gwaliori. 134

Translation of Persian inscription: "Yet he had strength enough to run and jump into the boat which immediately sank into the river, as a great mountain goes down by its own weight".

☆★☆

Plate 09 *Akbar slays a tigress which attacked the royal cavalcade: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 17/117. Inscribed: tarah Basawan amal Tara Kalan nami chehra Basawan. 68.

Plate 10 *Abu'l Fazl presents the bound and illustrated volume of the Akbar Nama: Akbar Nama,* Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ind. Ms. No. 3, fol. 176b. Inscribed: Govardhan. 32

Plate 11 *Akbar offers thanksgiving on news of victory in Bengal: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 101/117. Inscribed: tarah Lal amal Nand. 150

Plate 12 *Akbar at court receives the child Abdu'r Rahim: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 7/117. Inscribed: amal Anant. 60

Plate 13 *Akbar's triumphant entry into Surat (detail): Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 117/117. Inscribed: Farrukh Beg. 29

Plate 14 *Celebrated dancers from Mandu perform before Akbar: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 16/117. Inscribed: tarah Kesu Kalan amal Dharmdas. 66

Translation of Persian inscription:

(Top): "As the great warrior appeared with a falcon on his hand silence fell all around amid the princess, the dancing girls and the handsome gentry filled with joyous adoration".

(Bottom): "The Emperor matched his pleasure by offering him a house and adequate rewards. Besides he was free to spend four days at Saharanpur and set the 2nd day of Ramzan for his departure".

Plate 15 *Akbar inspects the capture of a wild elephant: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 39/117. Inscribed: tarah Lal amal Sanwala. 84.

Plate 16 *Akbar's adventures with the elephant Hawai: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. Nos. 21 and 22/117. Inscribed: tarah Basawan amal Chitra. 70, 72.

Plate 17 *Rejoicings on the birth of Prince Salim: Akbar Nama,* British Library Or. 12988, fol. 20b. 130

Plate 18 *Bullocks drag the cannons uphill during the siege of Ranthambhor: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 72/117. Inscribed: tarah Miskina amal Paras. 120.

Plate 19 *Raja Surjan Hada submits the keys of Ranthambhor fort: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 78/117. Inscribed: tarah Mukund amal Shankar. 126.

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Plate 20 *The Imperial army besieges Ranthambhor fort: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, 'Acc. No. 74/117. Inscribed: tarah Miskina amal Bhurah. 124.

Plate 21 *Details of the cannons being ignited.* 122.

Plate 22 *Details of pilgrims and sannyasis at the bathing ghat.* 104.

Plate 23 *Akbar hunts with trained cheetahs: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 92/117. Inscribed: tarah Lal amal Sanwala. 46

Plate 24 *Raja Surjan Hada submits the keys of Ranthambhor fort (detail): Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 75/117. Inscribed: tarah Mukund amal Shankar. 25

Plate 25 *Royal musicians perform at a marriage: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, double plage, Acc. Nos. 8 and 9/117. Inscribed: tarah Lal amal Banwali Khurd.

Translation of Persian inscription: "The ecstasy and excitement of a child's birth was well matched by generous offering of wealth by the emperor to those who worked with great skill and decorated the palace and places of banquets with superb art and skill. The emperor was so happy that his bounteous favour crossed all limits. He went so far to ask the dancing girls to offer them joy".

Plate 26 *Akbar's triumphant entry into Surat: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 117/117. Inscribed: Farrukh Beg. 142

Plate 27 *Battle between two rival groups of sannyasis at Thaneswar: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, double page, Acc. Nos. 61 and 62/117. Inscribed: (right page) tarah Basawan amal Tara Kalan.

Plate 28 *Ambassadors from Badakshah and from the Deccan pay tribute to the emperor: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 114/117. Inscribed: tarah Miskina amal Sarwan chehra nami hasht surat Madhu. 154

Plate 29 *Akbar orders the punishment of his foster brother (detail): Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 29/117. Inscribed: tarah Miskina amal Shankar nami chehra Miskina. 12

Translation of Persian inscription:

(Top): "Half the life still remaining, the ill doomed prisoner was dragged upstrairs by grabbing his long hair as per the order of the Emeror".

(Bottom): "Thereafter, to give him the punishment, he was thrown upside down so that his neck could break hitting the ground and the damaged brain could turn him mad".

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Plate 30 *A general drowns in crossing the Narbada River: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 26/117. Inscribed: tarah Miskina amal Paras. 74.

Translation of Persian inscription:

(Top): "As Muhammad Khan's son reached the bridge and patted the panting horse, the bridge gave way and he fell down with his horse in the river and many courtiers on the horses were also around him in the water".

(Bottom): "The emperor was astonished to see him learning the techniques of physical exercises and wrestling under the guidance of great intelligent masters. He believed that none could match his physical skill and strength. He also admired the art in the course of banquets".

Plate 31 *Building operations at Agra Fort: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. Nos. 45 and 46/117. Inscribed: tarah Miskina amal Sarwan. *Translation of Persian inscription:* "The beautifully chiselled and polished stones were so skilfully set in building the turrets, that it looked like the flames of red fire or a big shining mirror where one can see the whole world, or one could mistake it as a rosy face. The stones were so closely arrange that there was no place to put a single hair between them. No engineer could have ever seen such a massive fort on earth".

Plate 32 *Building operations at Agra Fort: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, Acc. Nos. 45 and 46/117. Inscribed: tarah Miskina amal Sarwan. *Translation of Persian inscription:* "As fate willed , my twenty years were spent in lifting up loads of stone to construct the turret and the four fortification around the palace, while Kasim Khan rolled in glory collecting huge money as taxes".

Plate 33 *Battle between two rival groups of sannyasis at Thaneswar: Akbar Nama,* I.S. 2/1896, double page, Acc. Nos. 61 and 62/117. Inscribed: (left page) tarah Basawan amal Asi. 106-7.

Plate 34 Fairies call on Hamza to kill the Dragon from the *Dastan-i-Amir Hamza,* c. 1567-82, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Plate 35 Princess Mihrafruz entertaining the legendary hero Rustam, son of Amir Hamza from the *Dastan-i-Amir Hamza,* c. 1567-82, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Plate 36 Krishna received by Raja Bhishmaka from a MS of the *Harivamsa,* c. 1590, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

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Plate 54 The Rendering of Justice, illustration to Amir Khusrau Dihlavi's *Matla'al-anvar*: Akbar period, probably Lahore A.D. 1595-1600. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Alexander Smith Cochran, No. 13.228.26. Size 9-3/4" x 6-1/4"

Plate 55 Jahangir Entertains Shah 'Abbas', Jahangir period, *Circa* A.D. 1618-1622, No. 42.16, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington.
Translation of Persian inscription:
(Top): "Jahangir and emperor Abbas shared some lovely moments on cup of wines. Thus they brought them close together".
(Bottom): "The law of God brought all people together and made them happy. Friends and brothers enjoyed one anothers company and dined together. It is the God's mercy that we all live together and share".

Plate 56 Babar celebrating his conquest of Hindustan from a MS of the *Babarnama*, c. 1589-90, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
Translation of Persian inscription: "The red, the white and the black colours of marble beautified the constructions, but I declared roll out a red carpet before me".

Plate 57 Zanib signals to Zayd from a MS of the *Khamsa-i-Nizami*, c. 1585-90, the Keir Collection, Richmond, Surrey.

Plate 58 *Babur and Companions Warming themselves before a Camp Fire.*
Translation of Persian inscription: "The fire was lit and it radiated light all around. And a sense of gratitude filled me. Though it was not the time to lit the fire to dispel the darkness, for the dawn was peeping behind the mountains, yet the light of the fire was delightful".

Plate 59 *Akbar learns to shoot under the guidance of Bairam Khan: Akbar Nama,* British Library, London, Or. 12988, fol. 158a. Inscribed: Govardhan, Ms. dated on one page to AD 1604. 20

Plate 60 Akbar visiting the Shrine of Khwaja Mu'in-ud-din Chishti at Ajmer from a MS of the *Akbarnama*, c. 1590-95, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

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